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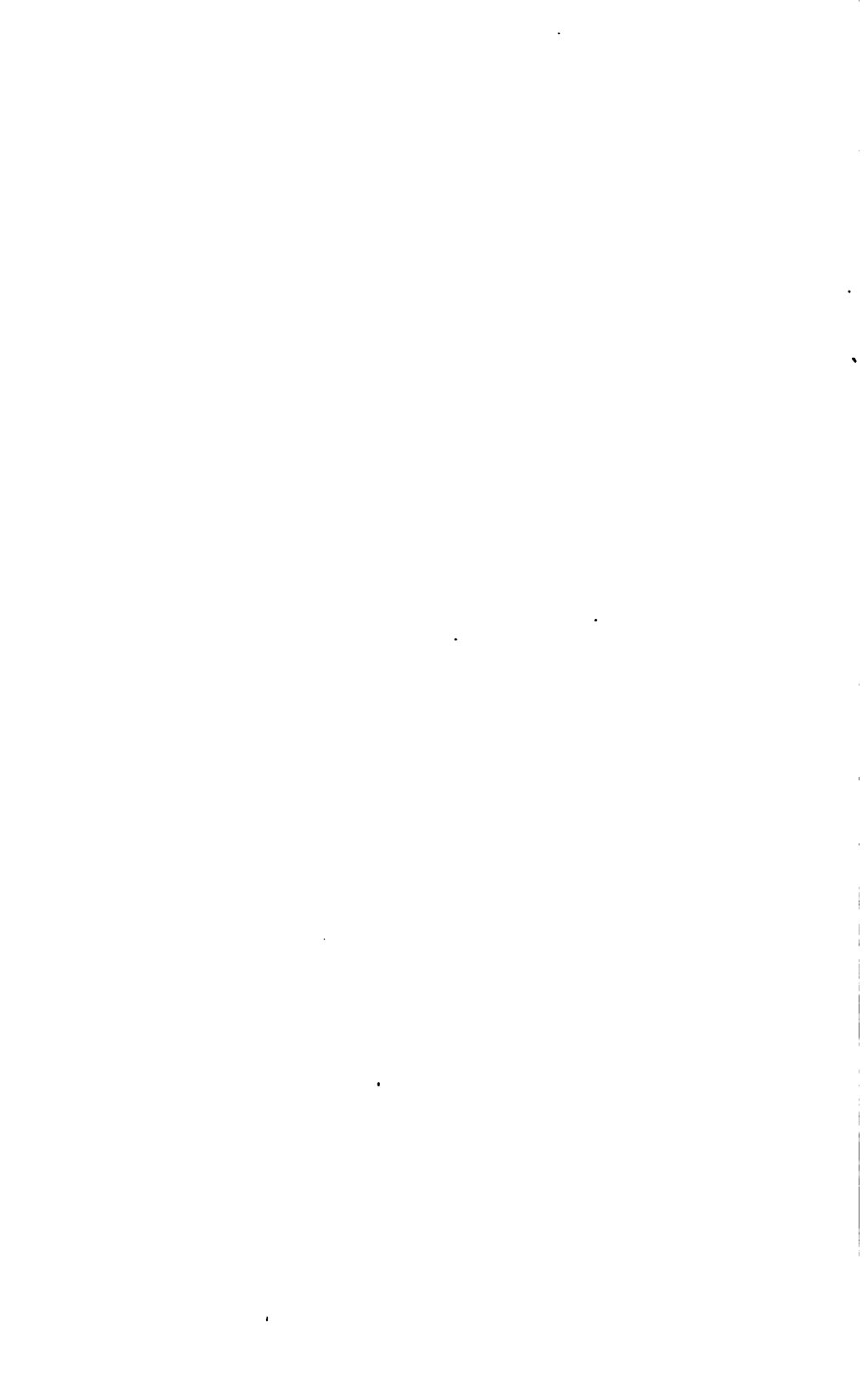
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**THE "FORTNIGHTLY"
HISTORY OF THE WAR**



THE "FORTNIGHTLY" HISTORY OF THE WAR

BY
COLONEL A. M. MURRAY

C.B., M.V.O.
AUTHOR OF "IMPERIAL OUTPOSTS"
AND
GOLD MEDALLIST ROYAL ARTILLERY INSTITUTION

WITH A FOREWORD BY
FIELD-MARSHAL SIR EVELYN WOOD
V.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., LL.D.

VOLUME I

Vis consili expers mole ruit suâ ;
Vim temperatam Di quoque provehant
In majus : idem odere vires
Omne nefas animo moventes.

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DEDICATED
TO THE
IMMORTAL MEMORY OF THE FALLEN
WHO HAVE SAVED OTHERS BUT THEMSELVES
THEY WOULD NOT SAVE

PREFACE

THE following pages are an amplification of a series of articles which have appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, month by month, since the beginning of the war, and which have now been collected in volume form, and brought up to date with the necessary amendments.

The book is confined to the record of the salient military events which have taken place in this great war of nations, it being left to others to deal with the political circumstances which led up to the rupture of peace.

Though written under the title given to the volume, the narrative can only be regarded as the preface to a more detailed and comprehensive history which could, under no circumstances, be written till after the conclusion of peace, when fuller evidence than is now forthcoming, or can at present be published, is available. Ten volumes, not one, will be required for this purpose.

Throughout the war the main and only permissible sources of information have been the official *communiqués* which each belligerent Government has issued with regularity once, and in the case of the French Government twice, a day. The British Government was at first more reticent than any other, and most of the news during the early months of the war about the operations of our Army was derived from foreign sources.

As time went on the War Office became more communicative, and since the autumn of 1915 daily bulletins have been issued from general headquarters on the Western Front; while from the other theatres of war, except only in Mesopotamia, news, especially when good, has been transmitted with reasonable regularity. In the British *communiqués* information given has always been confined to the bare statement of facts; and when, for military reasons, real or supposed, secrecy has been thought desirable, or when the course of operations has not

been favourable, the whole truth has not been disclosed till after the arrival of private reports.¹

The same remarks must apply to the Russian *communiqués*, which have been systematically meagre in regard to information required for the correct understanding of the ever-changing military situation, and which have caused us, in consequence, to fall back on Berlin and Vienna for current news which the Russian Government has failed to supply.

The French Government *communiqués* issued in Paris each day at noon and at midnight are admirable summaries of the daily situation in the western theatre of war, and are the most dependable sources of information for those who have followed the course of the campaign in France and Flanders. Brief and compendious, these *communiqués* are models of military reports which have never diverged one hair's-breadth from the path of truth. The same cannot be said of the Berlin and Vienna *communiqués*, which are truthful only so long as they record successes, but which are untrustworthy when reverses have to be explained away by distortion of facts.

The Press has unfortunately been able to give little assistance to the historian, not, it is perhaps needless to say, through any fault of its own, but because under the Defence of the Realm Act newspapers have lost their independence during the war, and are only allowed to publish such news as the Government thinks fit to make public.

During the first year of the war newspaper correspondents were not allowed within twenty miles of the front, and such information as they sent to their journals was based on second-hand evidence, which there was no means of verifying, and which was more often wrong than right. As time went on the rules were ostensibly relaxed, and a limited number of war correspondents were received at the Front, but their reports have been of little military value, owing to their being subjected to a double censorship—one having been set up at the seat of war, and the other in London.

The newspaper correspondent is allowed full scope for his imagination and descriptive powers as long as he keeps off military ground, and confines his reports to accounts of scenery,

¹ The first official reports of the Battles of Neuve Chapelle (10th March, 1915) and of Loos (25th September, 1915) may be cited as instances of what is stated above. When Lord French's despatches were published, describing the battles in detail, facts were brought to light which had not been previously stated, and which gave a different complexion to the operations from that contained in the first reports.

battlefields, and of the activities of the Young Men's Christian Association. Any expression of opinion about the course of the operations is ruthlessly excised by the censor, and so is any attempt at criticism.

Never before when the country has been at war has the conduct of its military authorities, and the operations of its armies in the field, been so closely veiled from public knowledge. Parliament, which passed the Defence of the Realm Act, has acquiesced in the restrictions which have been imposed, and the Press, being the servant of the public, has done the same, though not without occasional protest against rules which the country has only tolerated under plea of military necessity.

The volume covers a period of two years' war from the 5th August, 1914, to the same date in 1916. The plan adopted has been to state the facts of each operation in the order of their sequence, and then to add such explanatory comments as may be required for the elucidation of the events recorded. Published data only are made use of, all evidence which cannot be verified without access to confidential documents being ruled out.

Criticism has been sparingly resorted to, and only in the case of those few instances when it is necessary to explain causes of failure. The time will come when the critic will want his say; but for the moment his voice is hushed in the desire which every one has, neither to say a word nor think a thought which would, by inference or implication, appear in ever so small a degree to detract from the heroism of the brave men who are so proudly bearing the burden of Empire in the presence of the enemy.

Absorbing as their interest is, tactical details of British battles have been almost wholly eliminated from the text, as their discussion would open up contentious questions, which it is better not to raise till the war is over. What the publishers and author both hope is that the book, with its maps and index, may be of some antecedent use for reference purposes by those who intend to make a prolonged study of the war, and who, as time and opportunity offer, will be able to fill up for themselves the gaps which, for the present, are rightly and necessarily left open.

A. M. M.

FOREWORD

ALL students of War will warmly welcome this soldier-like History by one who is mentally equipped for the task, and who has also had considerable experience in Peace manœuvres and in War. The Author is already well known to reading soldiers by his publication *Imperial Outposts*, issued nine years ago, and has, in my opinion, been successful in the difficult task he has now essayed, expressing decided though restrained views on points concerning which few of us, owing to paucity of data available, have made up our minds.

If the lamented late Secretary of State for War were still alive he would probably endorse the criticism of the Author (*vide* p. 6) on his failure when creating a National Army to utilize the then existing Territorial Forces, which, so far as Infantry is concerned, was a well-thought out organisation.

I cannot entirely accept the dictum (*vide* pp. 7 and 8) that phalanx tactics leave little room for personal courage; and in face of the numbers of Divine-like instances of self-sacrifice in saving life, and the marvellous courage shown by many leaders, it is impossible for me to agree with the statement that human quality counts less than it did in former wars.

Readers of Dickens, in a work issued by the same firm of publishers, will remember the strikingly truthful statement that "the face of a brave man, with his soul in it, is a strong incentive to valour." I agree, however, with the Author's views that the Allies will take a very long time to beat Germany if we trust to attrition alone.

The contrasts of man-power are effectively shown on pp. 12 and 18; and the facts set forth on p. 17 should be studied by all pessimists who require tonics.

In these days, when the value of fortresses is being heavily discounted, it may be well to turn to p. 21, and to note the important effects of the delay caused by the defences of Liège, maintained by the loyal attitude of the Belgians, headed by their inspiring and chivalrous King.

The Author shows us clearly why General Joffre abandoned his plan for the invasion of Alsace.

Since Sir John Moore's retreat from Salamanca to Coruña, in 1808-9, there has been no military feat like that of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's in moving his troops from the Trouille to the Marne River, and it is impossible that Sir John French's masterly successful retirement from Mons, when pressed by numbers in the proportion of three to one, can ever be surpassed.

I am not prepared, from the experience of a war which, at least in the western sphere has resolved itself into a siege stretched over many hundreds of miles, to agree with the Author's contention that "the strategical rôle of Cavalry is a thing of the past," although I allow that armies, even when campaigning in the open field, will, weather permitting, find aircraft of great service for reconnaissance.

On p. 28 one great difficulty of combining the movements of allied armies is aptly illustrated, thus supplementing the numberless recorded instances in history from the time of the Duke of Marlborough to that of Lord Raglan.

I am obliged to dissent from the arguments on p. 71, that "because the recruits of the New Armies are physically and morally superior to those of the pre-war days, they may be made ready to 'go to the Front' in from four to six months."

If the battalions of the New Armies have merely to line trenches, and all details of their attack having been previously arranged by experienced Staff Officers, their duty were simply to rush headlong on the enemy, being gallantly led, they will, I admit, generally succeed. If, however, on going to the Front after only six months' training, their duties were to resemble those carried out by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien's men, whose conduct was so eloquently eulogised in Sir John French's despatch, quoted by the Author in a footnote, then I apprehend that in moments—

"When the officer's dead and the sergeant looks white,"

they may forget Rudyard Kipling's note of warning—

"Remember 'tis ruin to run from a fight."

NEWS TO THE PRESS

For nearly forty years I have been advocating more freedom for the Press in publishing observations on accomplished facts, so that I do not think I am prejudiced in disagreeing with the Author's views set forth on pp. 52 and 53 when I maintain the view that the decision of the Commander-in-Chief on the spot must override all other considerations.

I fully agree with the writer's condemnation of the useless slaughter caused by attacking in massed formations, and his apt comparison of the incident which caused the removal from his command of General von Steinmetz in 1870. It appears in this War to be owing to the Kaiser's personal error that von Steinmetz's folly is so often repeated.

I entirely dissent from the Author's views on Universal Compulsory Service, as expressed in his footnote p. 142. He is a firm believer in moral suasion, appraising all his countrymen, except so-called "Conscientious Objectors" and such like cranks, by his own temperament, which has induced three successive requests to be allowed to serve, all refused on the "age clause."

I can understand this high-minded man not feeling as I do, because he was a baby in the nursery when England with an Army of only seventy thousand men in the Crimea, found it necessary to hire Germans, Italians, and Swiss as soldiers, which formed our three "foreign contingents."

The main convenience to the Military Authorities in Compulsory Service is not, as the Author suggests, the saving of labour in recruiting, but economy of time in equipping recruits, and in training them after they are clothed and armed.

I differ from the Author believing that our ultimate security against attack from Germany is bound up in the maintenance of the independence of Belgium and of France, and it is doubtful whether our alliances could have been maintained without the alteration in our recruiting system.

I think, moreover, that if we had adopted Universal Compulsory Military Training for Home Defence, when Lord Roberts returned from South Africa in 1901, this World-wide War would not have been undertaken by Germany.

I think, also, that if when Lord Kitchener became Secretary of State for War the Cabinet had appealed to the country, the Act would have then been passed, and would thus have enabled us to organise labour, and to have kept at home thousands of patriotic skilled workmen, who enlisted, and of whom nearly fifty thousand have been necessarily recalled from overseas. Had these steps been taken it is my belief that the Allies might have dictated terms of peace during the past summer.

I have not hesitated to state points on which I am not in agreement with this careful military writer, but I conclude in expressing my great admiration for his work.

EVERLYN WOOD, F.-M.

October 8th, 1916.

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THE "FORTNIGHTLY" HISTORY OF THE WAR

CHAPTER I

BELLIGERENT STRENGTH OF THE COUNTRIES AT WAR

WHEN war was declared many varying estimates were published of the relative strengths of the rival forces, importance being attached to the numbers of fully trained men who were immediately available for service in the field, it being generally supposed that the fate of this war, as of that of 1870-71, would be decided by the events of the first six months. This supposition proved erroneous, the war having already lasted two years without the end being yet in view. It was not at first realised, as it is now, that the struggle which Germany provoked by her ambition for world-power is not one of armies, but of armed nations, where rulers have the power to draw on the whole manhood of their countries until the human reservoir has been exhausted. It thus came to pass that the fully trained men who were mobilised at the opening of the war were only the advanced guard, so to speak, of the main body which was to follow when time had been gained to organise the men, and train them to the use of arms.

The table on page 2, compiled from the various recruiting laws in force before the outbreak of war, shows at what age obligatory military service began and terminated in each of the countries mentioned.

The table does not count for much in estimating the belligerent strength of the nations now at war, for many men are fighting in our own and other armies who are both under and above the age fixed by law, some being as young as fifteen, and others as old as sixty. In Germany, Austria, Russia, and France no claim for discharge holds good in war time, even if the age limits specified for these countries have been reached.

In Germany the period of liability has already been extended to forty-seven, while men of the Landsturm Reserve, who under the law as it existed before the war could only be called

Country.	Military service commences.	Military service terminates.	Remarks.
Great Britain	18th birthday	41st birthday	Military Service Act, 1916.
Germany	17th birthday	45th birthday	Active military service does not commence before 20th birthday.
Austria	18th birthday	42nd birthday	Active military service commences from 1st January of year in which 21st birthday occurs.
Turkey	March 1st following 20th birthday	25 years subsequently	—
France	Year following 19th birthday	28 years from 1st October of the year following that in which 19th birthday occurs.	—
Belgium	18th birthday	33rd birthday in peace time	Those between 18 and 35 in addition to those serving on the 1st March, 1915, must serve for the duration of the war.
Russia	October following the year in which 20th birthday has occurred.	43rd birthday	—
Italy	20th birthday	39th birthday	—
Japan	17th birthday	39th birthday	Not called up for actual service till 20 years of age, but may enlist between 17 and 20.
Serbia	18th birthday	50th birthday	—
Bulgaria	22nd birthday	48th birthday	—
Montenegro	18th birthday	62nd birthday	—

Note.—No claim for discharge holds good in war time in the case of Germany, Russia, Austria and France, even if the age limits specified for these countries have been reached. In war time Austrian and German conscripts are called on for active service at any time after their 17th birthday.

up in case of invasion, have been used in large numbers to carry on the campaign in Poland. In Austria-Hungary men are being enrolled up to the age of fifty-seven, and in both France and

Germany the whole of the 1917 class of conscripts have been called to the colours nearly two years in advance of the normal time. Except in Russia, where the supply of men of military age is practically inexhaustible, and in Italy, where only fully trained men have so far been mobilised, recruiting laws are in abeyance, and the services of all physically capable men, irrespective of age, are being used for the purposes of the war. We in England have applied the principle of conscription to men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one, but if the war goes on it may be necessary to extend these limits of age, and make further demands on our reserve of human strength.

The supply of munitions and other accessories of modern fighting is a new factor of the war problem, and one which has a direct bearing on the capacity of a nation to carry on a prolonged campaign. Owing to the development of mechanical science and the introduction of quick-firing guns and rifles, the rate of fire has increased since the last great European war as much as twenty-fold. The French field gun, for instance, which was used in the war of 1870-71 could only fire two aimed rounds a minute, while as many as thirty rounds a minute have been frequently fired from the "Seventy-fives" after the range has been registered. With only ordinary effort our 18-pr. Q. F. field gun gives a yield of twelve to fifteen rounds a minute, and on an emergency this rate can be increased up to twenty rounds without overtaxing the powers either of gun or gunners. The rate of rifle fire has increased in equal proportion. It is on record that thirty-five aimed shots have been fired in one minute from the short Lee-Enfield rifle, the present service weapon of the British infantry, twenty to thirty rounds a minute being the rate obtainable by the average trained soldier. Six hundred rounds a minute can be fired with care from any type of machine-gun now in use in our army, and so murderous are these weapons for defensive purposes that the tendency is to multiply them more and more as the war continues to run its course. In some localities on both western and eastern fronts the Germans are reported to have a machine-gun for every ten men, while on the Galician and Bessarabian frontiers the proportion of machine-guns with the Austro-Hungarian army is even greater. When our Expeditionary Force first embarked for France every battalion took with it one section of two machine-guns; now every company has its section, and there is a machine-gun corps in addition.

Then as regards artillery, a race has been going on between the Allies and the Central Powers ever since the opposing forces

settled down to a war of trenches. On both sides it is now realised that the last word will be said by the guns. Whenever a tactical success has been obtained it has been due to the establishment of an antecedent artillery preponderance before the infantry attack was launched. This was the secret of the French success last year in Champagne, and of the Russian failure in Galicia and Poland.

Throughout the winter of 1915-16, and onwards, the factories of the belligerent and neutral countries alike strained every nerve to comply with orders for guns and munitions, which cannot be turned out sufficiently quickly to satisfy the increasing demands of the war.¹ Workers as well as fighters had to be first mobilised, and then organised, so as to maintain the necessary output of munitions with a minimum dislocation of the *personnel* required for the combatant services. In conscript countries, where every man during time of war is at the disposal of the State, this task is comparatively simple, and only requires the principles and practice of conscription to be extended to the workshop; but in Britain, where organised labour is the bedrock of our industrial life, the substitution of State for self-control calls for delicate and discreet handling. The workers resent outside interference with their elected leaders, and at every step which it takes Government has to carry the leaders with it in order to secure the co-operation of the workers. The provisions of the Munitions Act are for this reason less drastic than those of the Military Service Act, and will remain so until the call for change comes from below. None the less is the process of national organisation going on,

¹ During a conference of representatives of the Allied Powers in London on the 13th July, 1916, Mr. Lloyd George gave an interesting account of his stewardship, and threw much light on the work which the new department accomplished during the first year of its existence.

"When we last met," he said, "the Russian armies were facing a hail-storm of iron with flesh and blood. The British troops were condemned to an enforced activity because our munitions were not equal to a sustained attack. We had to create out of next to nothing arsenals to provide munitions for the huge army now in the field. Hundreds of thousands of men and women, hitherto unaccustomed to metal and chemical work, have been trained for munition making. Our heavy guns are rolling in at a great rate, and as for ammunition we are turning out nearly twice as much ammunition in a single week as we fired in the great offensive in September 1915. The new factories and workshops which we have set up have not yet attained one-third of their full capacity, but their output is increasing with great rapidity. If officials, employees and workmen, keep at it with the same zeal as they have hitherto employed, our supplies will soon be overwhelming; but our task is only half accomplished. Every great battle furnishes additional proof that this is a war of equipment. More ammunition means more victories, and fewer casualties."

BELLIGERENT STRENGTH OF THE COUNTRIES 5

the whole manhood of the country having been practically mobilised for war purposes, either in the combatant services or in munition factories, or in industrial work which is necessary for the maintenance of our internal and foreign trade.

ALLIED POWERS.

I. Country.	II. Total male population.	III. Males between 15 and 60.	IV. Remarks.
United Kingdom	21,946,495	13,061,000	Census 1911
Australia	2,313,035	1,436,000	Census 1911
Canada	3,821,995	2,370,000	Census 1911
New Zealand	531,910	330,000	Census 1911
British South Africa	681,000	400,000	White population only
British Empire (ex- cluding India)	28,613,435	17,597,000 ¹	White population only
France	19,500,000	11,770,000	White population only
Russia	85,726,300	50,721,000	Estimate 1913
Italy	17,021,690	9,265,000	Census 1911
Japan	25,046,380	16,438,000	Census 1908
Serbia	1,503,511	872,000	Census 1910
Belgium	3,680,790	2,299,000	Census 1910
Portugal	2,828,691	1,534,000	Estimate 1911
Montenegro	250,000	133,000	Estimate
Total	184,170,979	110,159,000	

ENEMY POWERS.

I. Country.	II. Total male population.	III. Males between 15 and 60.	IV. Remarks.
Germany	32,040,166	18,661,000	Census 1910
Austria-Hungary	25,256,185	14,419,000	Census 1910
Turkey	10,500,000	6,300,000	Approximate estimate excluding the Christian population
Bulgaria	2,206,691	1,280,000	Census 1910
Total	70,003,042	40,660,000	

The above figures give a ratio of preponderance in favour of the Allied Powers of between five to two, and three to one, this estimate being exclusive of India, which has sent four separate expeditionary forces to the various fronts.

¹ The figures given in Column III for the British Empire are approximately one million less than those for the German Empire, but the table takes no account of India, the male population of which, according to the Census of 1911, was 161,219,376.

The facts being as stated, the numerical problem is reduced to one of population statistics, the numbers of the adult male population being the main factor governing its solution. The table on page 5 gives the number for each of the Powers at war, together with the number between the ages of fifteen and sixty, this latter table giving the approximate number of men and boys who are available in one capacity or another for the service of the war.

The number of men available is only part of the problem before us, the use to which these men can be put depending on the arrangements made for their mobilisation, for their organisation in units, and for their concentration in armies. The more thoroughly these arrangements are worked out beforehand, the easier it becomes for a nation to pass from a state of peace to one of war. The object of peace preparations should be to establish a machinery which admits of automatic expansion when the order for mobilisation is given. Such a machinery was set up by Lord Haldane when he created the Territorial Force organisation, which allowed of unlimited expansion on any scale required by war exigencies. When Lord Kitchener began to raise the New Armies for the present war he failed, for whatever reason, to make use of this machinery, but none the less was it the outcome of much study and "clear thinking," and is in all respects a model of sound peace organisation.¹

The organisation of the German Army is admittedly the best in the world. In 1870 Mr. Gladstone described it as "the most tremendous weapon the skill of man ever forged." Since 1870 the organisation has been reconstructed, developed, expanded, and repeatedly tested by practical experiment. When the war began there were twenty-five German Army Corps and eleven Cavalry Divisions, giving a first-line force of about a million of men immediately available for concentration at the end of the fifth day after mobilisation had been ordered. These twenty-five Corps, comprising fifty Divisions, were speedily followed by the mobilisation of fifty duplicate Reserve

¹ Speaking at Cambridge on the 28th June of the services rendered by the volunteers, Lord French referred as follows to Lord Haldane's work in connection with the creation of the Territorial Force: "The nation is, indeed, deeply indebted to the determined energy, skill and foresight of that great and distinguished statesman. It was he who saw the real use to which the volunteers might be turned, and the general result was that great Territorial Army which is administered by those invaluable Territorial County Associations, the conception of which was surely one of the greatest strokes of genius any statesman ever exhibited."

Divisions, the *cadres* of which existed during peace. Later on further formations were created from partially trained and untrained men in the Ersatz Reserve, and on the 1st April, 1916, it is believed that 170 German Divisions, with eleven Cavalry Divisions, were either in the field or in reserve, 119 of which were in the western theatre of war, forty-nine on the Russian front, and two in the Balkans. If all these Divisions were up to established strength they would give a total yield of something like 8,500,000, besides the waiting men training at the depots.

Returns have been made from time to time by different writers of the net wastage in the German Armies; but in the absence of verified data these estimates are mostly guesswork, and cannot be accepted as reliable evidence for historical purposes. One authority, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, who has given close attention to war statistics, writing in *Land and Water* on the 9th March, 1916, came to the conclusion that on the 31st December, 1915, after seventeen months of war, the net German permanent loss was 8,250,000, or in round numbers 190,000 a month, while Mr. H. Warner Allen, the British Press representative with the French Armies, puts the figures somewhat higher. Assuming Mr. Belloc's figures to be approximately correct, and the continuation of the wastage at the same rate, the net loss after two years of war will amount to 4,560,000, or 2,280,000 a year. As the average number of German youths who reach the age of fifteen every year is not more than 550,000, Germany is losing every year while the war lasts 1,730,000 males out of Column 2 in the above table, and on the 1st August, 1916, the total of 18,661,000 will have been reduced to 15,201,000.

Assuming that 2,000,000 of this number are required for munition and other industrial work, and that another 2,000,000 are either too young or physically disqualified for military service, there still remains a balance of more than 11,000,000 men who are available to maintain the 170 German Divisions now in the field. Attrition will clearly not bring Germany to her knees for some time to come.

As numbers decrease quality depreciates, but human quality counts for less than it did in wars, owing to the increased share taken by machines in present-day battles. Behind rows of barbed wire and machine-guns, even the faint heart feels secure, and, when it comes to attacking, German military discipline is so ruthless in its methods, the conscript, whatever his quality, knows that he must either go forward when

ordered, or meet his death from behind. Phalanx tactics leave little room for individual courage.

Though the Austro-Hungarian Army only contained sixteen Army Corps on the outbreak of war, the Austrian and Hungarian Landwehr Divisions were incorporated in the Corps organisation, and on mobilisation each Corps took the field with three instead of two Divisions. This gave a first-line army of about 1,000,000, including artillery and engineers, but excluding Cavalry, which was composed of eleven independent Divisions. New formations were gradually created, and on the 1st April there were seventy-six Austro-Hungarian Divisions in the field, forty-two of which were facing the Russians from the Pripet down to the Roumanian frontier, while thirty Divisions were opposing the Italians on the Isonzo and in the Tyrol.

The Austrian losses have been proportionately greater than those of the Germans, and especially in prisoners. According to the estimate of a Hungarian statistician the casualties up to the middle of February 1916 were as follows—

Killed	728,500
Prisoners	759,000
Wounded	2,600,000
<hr/>	
Total	4,082,500

Allowing for 50 per cent. of the wounded returning to duty, this would give a total net loss for nineteen months, in round numbers, of 2,780,000, and these figures have been largely increased by further casualties which have taken place since February 1916.

These losses have made a big inroad into the figures given in Column 8 of the table, and in order to maintain the strength of the formations in the field the Austrian Government has been obliged to call up conscripts of the 1916, 1917, and 1918 classes, as well as men who had completed their period of obligatory service up to the age of fifty-seven. If the war goes on for another year the difficulty of finding effectives to replace casualties will increase, and it may be found necessary to reduce the number of Divisions to prevent their falling below the war establishments. This will be the beginning of the end.

The Turks are believed to have mobilised fifty-two Divisions each of 15,000 men, but the strength of the Turkish Division

is a variable quantity. Every Turk capable of bearing arms has been summoned to the colours. Since the revolution of 1908 Christians as well as Moslems have been taken for the conscription, but they are still allowed to escape service by paying a fine, while those who have been enrolled have only been used for non-combatant and menial duties. Turkey's military strength depends wholly on the Moslem population. Before the war liability to service extended over twenty-five years. About 100,000 young Moslems reach the age of twenty every year, 70,000 of whom were taken for the conscription. Service in the Nizam, or active army, was for three years, after which the conscript passed into the Ihtiat or Reserve, or active army, for six years. Then he was transferred to the 1st Class Redif for nine years, and finally passed into the Mustafiz, or Landsturm, for the remainder of his obligatory period of military service; but in Asia service in the Mustafiz only lasted for two years. Young men not accepted for the colours after a few weeks' drill were placed in the 2nd Class Redif, and remained with it for eighteen years, after which they were transferred to the Mustafiz. Until the war broke out the Mustafiz register was irregularly kept, and no Mustafiz men were mobilised for the Balkan War of 1912. For some months before the outbreak of the present war German officers had been occupied in revising the mobilisation registers, and the following estimate of strength, as worked out by them, may be taken as approximately correct—

Nizam and Ihtiat Troops	880,000	} fully trained men.
1st Class Redif	270,000	
2nd Class Redif	860,000	untrained men.
Mustafiz	90,000	trained men only.

Total 1,100,000

Since the war began large additions have been made to these numbers by calling up all Mustafiz men, and enrolling the classes of 1916, 1917, 1918. On the 1st June, 1916, Turkey cannot have had less than 600,000 men in the field, with an equal number of men training at the depots. Though the Turks have suffered heavy losses they are not yet beaten, and they have sufficient men to carry on the war for at least another year, unless their armies are decisively defeated, or a revolution at Constantinople brings the war to an end.

The Turk is a born soldier, patient, enduring, and unaffected

by defeat. Hitherto the Turkish Army has been well supplied with munitions by the Central Powers, and the general direction of the strategy is in German hands. As long as Germany can continue to wage this war there will be no withdrawal of support from the Turks, as the collapse of Turkey would mean the end of German dreams of Asiatic dominion.

In 1912 the Bulgarian General Staff mobilised the whole of the Bulgarian Army, which then consisted of nine Divisions, each of these Divisions with its reserve brigades amounting to a complete Army Corps numbering some 40,000 men. Reckoning artillery and cavalry, the mobilisation is believed to have produced a force of 850,000 men collected together in organised units. These were not all combatants, but perhaps as many as 260,000 to 280,000 were, and after the concentration had been effected there were some 50,000 men left at the depots to make good the wastage in the war. Since the Second Balkan War, which ended with the Treaty of Bucharest, Bulgaria has added certainly one Division to her Army, and with the new levies drawn from Macedonia, which is now in her occupation, after making due allowance for losses, she had probably not less than 450,000 men under arms on the 1st June, 1916.

A brief account of the armed strength of the Allied Powers is necessary for the purposes of this chapter. Taking the British Empire first, the following figures give the approximate strength of the Imperial forces at the beginning of August 1914 :

Regular Forces at Home and in the Colonies	156,100
Army Reserve	146,500
Special Reserve.	68,000
Territorial Force	251,000
Channel Islands Militia	8,000
Native Colonial Forces	11,500
Regular Forces forming the Indian Garrison	78,400
Native Troops in India, including those of Native States and Volunteers	250,000
Overseas Dominions' Troops, including Cadets and Members of Rifle Clubs . . .	250,000
Total	1,209,500

Of the above numbers only about half were organised in Divisional units during peace. There was an Expeditionary Force maintained at home, comprising six regular Divisions

and one independent Cavalry Division, with a Territorial Force of fourteen Divisions, and there were nine Divisions in India, composed partly of British and partly of native Indian troops, with two independent Cavalry Divisions, making twenty-nine Infantry and three Cavalry Divisions altogether. The remaining troops were either in reserve, or allotted to the overseas garrisons for local defence.

During the months which intervened between August 1914 and May 1916 nearly 4,000,000 men must have been added to the above numbers, for on the 2nd May, 1916, Mr. Asquith stated in the House of Commons that "the total naval and military effort of the Empire from the beginning of the war up to date exceeded 5,000,000 of men." Not half these men were organised in Divisional units at the time when this statement was made. On the 1st June, 1916, there were forty-two Regular and twenty-eight Territorial Divisions, making a total of seventy Divisions, or seventy-one if the Naval Division is taken into account. In addition to these home-raised Divisions there were twelve Divisions of overseas troops who had been raised in the Dominions, giving eighty-three Divisions altogether, excluding troops detached from India for service in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and East Africa. The strength of these eighty-three Divisions may be put down at 1,650,000 officers and men, with 150,000 troops on the lines of communications, and about 300,000 employed in subsidiary campaigns and overseas garrisons. This accounts for 2,100,000 men, the balance of those enrolled being either in reserve or undergoing training. The permanent loss due to casualties up to the 1st June, 1916, did not exceed 400,000.

Having regard to the figures of strength contained in Column 8 of the table given on p. 5, and the number of men now available under the terms of the Military Service Act, together with the forces which are at the disposal of the Dominion Governments,¹ there would be no difficulty in doubling the number of Divisions if necessity arises to do so. Owing to the geographical position of Great Britain, and her consequent immunity from territorial attack, the longer the war goes on the stronger will her belligerent power become. All that is wanted is time to develop her resources and add to

¹ Canada has already raised a force of 250,000 men for the war, 120,000 of whom are at the front, and has undertaken to double this force by the end of 1916. The Australian Commonwealth has decided to maintain a force of 300,000 men till the end of the war, while the New Zealand Contingent at the front, in the spring of 1916, amounted to 37,000 of all ranks. South Africa has sent 10,000 men to East Africa with the promise of more if they are required.

her armies. In another year, if the wastage in the enemy's ranks continues as heretofore, she will be powerful enough to carry on even a single-handed war against the Central Powers.

The French started the war with nearly 4,000,000 fully trained men between the ages of 19 and 48. Of this number 2,500,000 belonged to the Active Army and its reserves, while the Territorial Army absorbed the remainder. Service in the Active Army during peace was for three years, followed by eleven years in the reserve. After completing fourteen years service the conscript passed into the Territorial Army for seven years, and then into the Territorial Reserve for a final period of seven years. France is divided into twenty-one Army Corps districts, which have formed the basis for French military organisation throughout the war. When war was declared the twenty-one first-line Corps of the Active Army were immediately mobilised, and it was with these troops that the French fought during the first week of the western campaign. The strength of this first-line army was about 1,000,000. The second-line army was composed of Territorial troops, who were mobilised simultaneously with the men of the first-line army, and by the 1st December most of these second-line troops had arrived at their concentration rendezvous. There were then forty-two Corps, or eighty-four Divisions, in the field, and there is reason to think that no other field formations have been created. The balance of the fully trained men, and all untrained men who have since been called to the colours, have been used to replace casualties in these eighty-four Divisions.

The French Government has never published official lists of casualties, and the Paris Press has had orders to observe strict reticence on the subject. The losses have been heavy, but not so heavy as those of the Germans, and up to the 1st June, 1916, the permanent loss is not believed to have exceeded 2,500,000. As every man in France, from the youngest to the oldest, is either serving in the army or in the munition factories, the French have sufficient men to maintain their eighty-four Divisions at war strength for another two years if the war lasts so long.

So far as the supply of men goes Russia is in a better position than any other of the Allied Powers to continue the war till victory crowns her efforts. Her resources are practically inexhaustible. Every year about 1,800,000 young men reach the age of twenty, and after allowing for wastage due to deaths and emigration, there are some 28,000,000 or more men

between the ages of twenty and forty-three who are available for service during peace. Accepting the figures of a German statistician, who estimated the permanent Russian loss in men up to the 1st January, 1916, to be 4,000,000, there remain 24,000,000 men, and if we deduct from this number 6,000,000 as being physically unfit for service, and those employed in industrial war work, there remains a balance of 18,000,000 men of military age who are either enrolled, or are available for enrolment when called up by the military authorities.

In the Russian Army young men who are taken by conscription serve for three years with the colours—men of the artillery and engineers for four years—after which they pass for seven years into the first Army Reserve, and then for eight years into the second Army Reserve, making a total of eighteen years' service altogether. They are then transferred into the 1st Ban of the Opolchenie, or Imperial Militia, which corresponds to the German Landsturm. Besides the colour service men, who have done their eighteen years in the Active Army and its two Reserves, the 1st Ban of the Opolchenie is composed of all men who are physically fit for military service, and who have not been exempted for family reasons, but for whom there has been no room with the colours. The 2nd Ban of the Opolchenie comprises all men who have been exempted from service for family or other reasons, or have been passed medically unfit. Though without any training whatever, they are liable to be called up on mobilisation, and many doubtless have been summoned to the colours during the past year.

Taking the recruiting figures in round numbers for the years immediately preceding the war, out of the 1,800,000 men who reached the age of twenty each year, 600,000 were on the average exempted and 700,000 passed fit for service. The 600,000 were enrolled forthwith in the 2nd Ban of the Opolchenie, while of the 700,000 taken for the conscription 500,000 were selected for training with the colours, and the remaining 200,000 entered on the rolls of the 1st Ban of the Opolchenie.

Allowing for a normal peace wastage of 80 per cent., it has been calculated that when war broke out there were approximately 7,500,000 men between the ages of twenty and forty-three who had been fully trained for three years, some for four years, with the colours. Deducting the wastage of 4,000,000, there remained on the 1st January, 1916, 8,500,000 fully trained men, besides 4,500,000 or more men of the 1st Ban of the Opolchenie, all of whom are believed to have been mobilised and under training for the past twelve months. Without

reckoning any of the 2nd Ban of the Opolchenie, we may take it that Russia has now in the field or in reserve at the depots not less than 8,000,000 men who are all of military age, and by this time may be regarded as fully trained men.

The above calculation takes no account of the large reserve of strength which is to be found in the ranks of the 2nd Ban of the Opolchenie, which is composed, as stated above, of men exempted from the conscription for family or other reasons. Making a liberal allowance for peace wastage and for those required for industrial employment, these men must total up to something like 10,000,000. They were without any military training when war broke out, but seeing that there were 8,000,000 men under arms on the 1st January, 1916, there is abundant time to give them a year's training before their services will be required. For the time being Russia has a surplus of trained men who are more than sufficient to replace wastage in the field armies, but who cannot be organised in new formations owing to the difficulty in equipping them.

Without going into further details, it is clear from the above calculation that even if the wastage continues at the rate of 4,000,000 in fifteen months, Russia can maintain her armies at their present strength for several years more by drawing on the 2nd Ban of the Opolchenie, without discounting the future by calling up classes in advance of the normal period, or by recalling men over forty-three years of age.

In Italy every man is liable to military service from the age of twenty to thirty-nine. On reaching the age of twenty men are placed in three categories—

- (1) Those who are taken by lot for the colours.
- (2) Those for whom there is no room with the colours.
- (3) Those who are exempted from service for family reasons specified by law.

Men in category (1) serve for two years with the colours, after which they go to the Reserve of the Active Army for six years. Men in category (2) are enrolled at once in the Reserve of the Active Army for eight years, at the end of which period they and the men in category (1) are passed for four years into what is called the Mobile Militia, which corresponds to the German Landwehr. They are then transferred into the Territorial Militia, with which they serve for seven years to complete their full period of nineteen years of obligatory service. The men in category (3) pass the whole of their obligatory service in the Territorial Militia, receiving no training whatever till they are called up for war service.

BELLIGERENT STRENGTH OF THE COUNTRIES 15

The following table shows how the service of the men is regulated according to the categories in which they are placed by the recruiting authorities.

Active Army.			Reserve Army.		
Categories.	With the Colours.	With the Reserve.	Mobile Militia.	Territorial Militia.	Total Years.
1st Category	2	6	4	7	19
2nd "	—	8	4	7	19
3rd "	—	—	—	19	19

After deducting emigrants, men put back for the following year, those who were medically unfit, and one-year volunteers, the average number of recruits placed each year in the first category during recent years was 150,000, in the second category 86,000, and in the third category 28,000. All men in category (1) were fully trained, while those in category (2), who correspond to the German Ersatz Reserve, were only partly trained, being called up at the discretion of the War Minister for one or more periods of training not exceeding twelve months altogether during their eight years' service in the Reserve of the Active Army.

The approximate war strength of the Active and Reserve Armies as given by a writer in the Italian Press before the war was as follows—

Officers	41,700
Active Army with Colours	290,000
Reserve, including men of 1st and 2nd Categories	688,800
Mobile Militia	800,000
Territorial Militia	1,890,000
Total	8,160,000

The above numbers include about 1,200,000 fully trained soldiers who have been through the ranks, with some 800,000 or more partly trained men of the second category, the remaining 1,000,000 being completely untrained men who have passed all their service in the third category.

The trained men are organised in four armies, each army consisting of three Corps, one Cavalry Division, and a number of troops for the lines of communication. The twelve Corps are recruited and organised on a territorial basis, each Corps

having its allotted area. The Italian Army Corps, which is larger than that in other European armies, is composed of two Active Army Divisions, one Mobile Militia Division brought up to war strength from the Territorial Militia, one regiment of Bersaglieri, or light infantry, one cavalry regiment, one field artillery regiment, and the usual technical and administrative units. The strength of the Corps amounts to 50,000 officers and men, 126 guns, the strength of each of the armies being approximately 150,000 men with 378 guns. This would give a first-line force of 600,000 men with 1500 guns and 16,000 sabres, and it was with a force of this strength that Italy opened the campaign against Austria. These *cadres*, however, only absorbed half the trained men at the disposal of the Italian General Staff, and it is believed that as soon as the first-line troops had been dispatched to the front duplicate Divisions were mobilised in each of the Army Corps districts. Whether these Divisions have been sent to the front is not publicly known, but in any case it is clear that Italy has so far only put forth half her strength, and is capable of doubling her efforts if her finances can bear the additional burden.

The military strength of Japan need not be considered in detail, as there is no present intention of using Japanese troops in Europe. The expediency of doing so has more than once come under consideration, but the Japanese Government have never shown any inclination to send their troops overseas. In their view they can do better service for the cause of the Allies by placing their arsenals and workshops at the disposal of Russia. The war strength of the first-line Japanese Armies is about 600,000 combatant troops organised in nineteen Divisions, but behind these are the second-line, or Kobi, troops, while the Kokumin, or Landsturm, men form a third line for home defence. While the Japanese Army constitutes a final reserve in case of emergency, the Allied Powers have sufficient men for their purpose without drawing on the Mikado's army.

When the war broke out Belgium mobilised about 120,000 men, who were organised in four Infantry and two Cavalry Divisions, but there are now 250,000 Belgians under arms, and this number would be trebled if Belgium was not in the military occupation of the Germans. A certain number of young Belgians escaped from Belgium before it had been overrun by the enemy, but the majority remained behind, and are virtually prisoners in their own country.

Serbia mobilised 850,000 men at the beginning of the war,

of which number more than 200,000 have been killed, died of starvation, or are prisoners of war. Reduced to 140,000 men, the Serbian Army is now at Salonika, waiting its opportunity in conjunction with the Anglo-French troops to reconquer the territory from which it was driven in the autumn of 1915. These 140,000 men represent for the time being Serbia's total strength, there being no men in reserve to replace wastage.

Enough has been said in the pages of this chapter to justify belief in the ultimate triumph of the Allies. If they resolve to endure to the end their victory is incontestable : the figures given in the table of strength admit of no other conclusion. All that is wanted is unity of purpose and co-ordination of effort. The struggle will be long, arduous, and destructive. The end will come, not dramatically, but gradually and surely, as the result of attrition due to the continuous pressure exerted by the Allied Powers, who are growing in strength as they develop their resources.

CHAPTER II

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST

August 15th to September 15th

1914

German plan of campaign—Seizure of Luxemburg—Check at Liège—Concentration of the opposing forces—French invasion of Alsace-Lorraine—French defeat on the Sambre—French retreat—Battle of Mons—British retreat—Anglo-French concentration south of the Marne—Von Kluck's mistake—Battle of the Marne—German defeat—Retreat to the Aisne—Failure of the German plan of campaign—Causes.

THE German plan of campaign as indicated by the course of events, was briefly as follows. Of the twenty-six corps at the immediate disposal of the German General Staff when war broke out twenty were brought into line against France, and six against Russia, the intention being to strike a rapid blow at the French Armies while they were concentrating, and after decisively defeating them dictate terms of peace at Paris. Half a million of men would then be left to occupy the northern territory of France, while the rest of the victorious troops would be counter-marched to the eastern theatre of war to join hands with the Austro-Hungarian Army in attacking Russia. The German Staff counted on Russian mobilisation being too slow to admit of any attempt being made to invade East Prussia or Galicia for at least two months after the declaration of war, and by that time it was expected that France would have been brought to her knees. In pursuance of this plan it was arranged that the Austro-Hungarian Army should concentrate in Galicia, make a rapid incursion into Poland, and hold the Russians in check behind the Bug till the Kaiser had settled matters with the French. The Serbian Army was regarded as a *quantité négligeable*, while the Army of Great Britain was thought to be too small to be of any weight in the impending struggle.

The eastern frontier of France being practically closed against an invasion from Germany by the formidable line of defences along the Meuse and Moselle, extending for some 120 miles from the entrenched camp at Verdun to the Fortress of Belfort, the Kaiser determined under a pre-arranged plan,

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST 19

which had been elaborated with great pains, to violate the neutrality of Belgium and Luxemburg, and using these two countries as subsidiary bases for his armies, to enter French territory by the northern frontier, and force the French to fight for the defence of Paris before the concentration of their armies was complete.

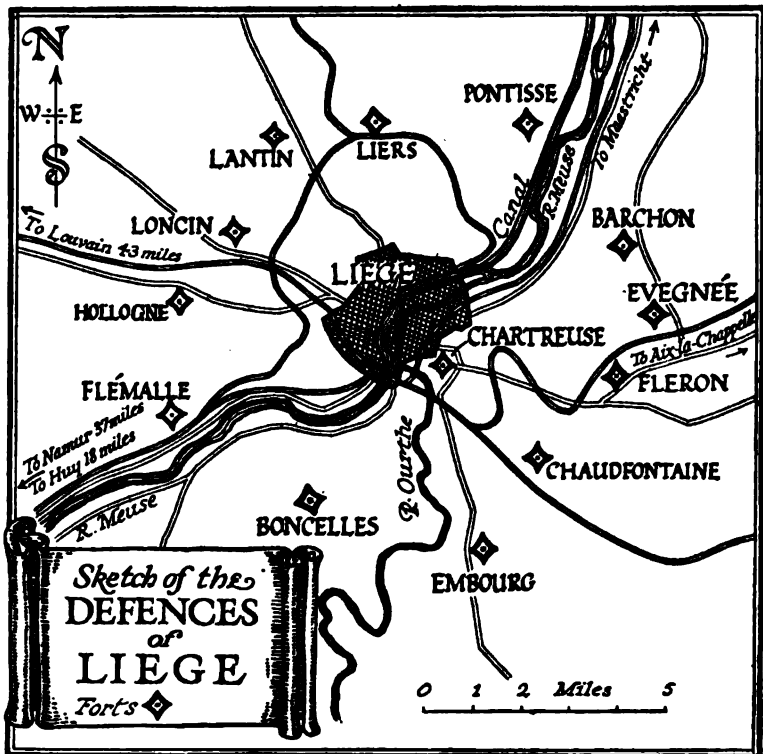
In furtherance of this plan this is briefly what took place. Germany declared war on Russia on the 1st August; the mobilisation of the German Army being ordered at 5.15 a.m. on that day. On the 2nd a German force, consisting of some covering troops from Coblentz, crossed the frontier into the Duchy of Luxemburg, and took possession of the capital and the whole railway system of the duchy. On the same day a Division from each of the three corps, the 7th, 9th and 10th, which were always kept in a semi-mobilised state, were moved to the Belgian frontier and bivouacked round Aix-la-Chapelle. At 7 p.m. an ultimatum was sent to the Belgian Government demanding a right of passage for German troops through Belgian territory, the independence of Belgium being guaranteed by Germany, who would pay the cost of all damage done by German troops. If the offer was refused Belgium would be treated as an enemy. At 4 a.m. on the 8th the Belgian Government sent a reply refusing the German offer, whereupon German troops crossed the frontier, and occupied Visé the same night.

Liège lies astride of the Meuse at a point of considerable strategical importance, since it is in the centre of the narrow *trouée* between the Dutch frontier and the Ardennes, through which the trunk line from Cologne runs on its way to Brussels. The town has been fortified for many years past, the present fortifications having been constructed by Brialmont in the 'seventies. They consist, as shown in the sketch below, of six large pentagonal forts, and an equal number of small triangular ones, with communicating trenches. The forts were about 8000 to 9000 yards from the centre of the town, half of them being situated on the right bank of the Meuse, and half on the left, the distance between each work varying from 4000 to 7000 yards.

Their names and positions are shown on the sketch. The armament of the large forts consisted of two 6-inch, four 4.7-inch, two trench mortars, and four 8.9-inch big guns, all mounted in steel cupolas standing on concrete foundations, the smaller forts being equipped with similar guns, but with fewer of them. Brialmont planned his works for a garrison of 80,000, but the Belgians were taken by surprise, and no more than 20,000 men were available at the moment to oppose the

German attack. General Leman, an engineer officer, more famous as a mathematician than as a soldier, was in command of the garrison, and in the short time available did the best he could to prepare the defence.

Late in the evening of the 4th the 7th Corps, leading the attack, approached the southern forts on the right bank of the Meuse, and all through the night bombarded them with



field guns. Early in the morning of the 5th an attempt was made to rush Forts Boncelles, Embourg, Chaudfontaine, and Fleron, but the Germans failed to get through and lost heavily in the attempt. On the 6th a combined attack by the infantry of the 7th, 9th and 10th German Corps on the southern forts met with the same fate as the first attack on the previous day, but the Germans were successful in silencing Forts Fleron and Chaudfontaine. On the morning of the 7th German troops entered Liège and, feeling the position to be hopeless, General Leman ordered a retirement of the garrison to the left bank.

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST 21

The siege train arrived on the 7th and the bombardment was continued with heavier guns, but it was not till the 18th, after the Germans had brought up one of their 42-cm. howitzers, that the forts on the left bank of the river were captured. General Leman held out till the 15th in Fort Loncin, and nearly lost his life during the bombardment.

The forts of Liège did their work by checking the enemy's advance at the opening of the campaign, when the success of the German plans depended on the time-table of movements being punctually carried out. If the Belgian Government had accepted the Kaiser's ultimatum the Germans would have occupied Brussels a fortnight earlier than they did, and General Kluck would have crossed the frontier before the Allies were ready to oppose him. Time was gained and Paris was saved. France owes this to the courage of the Belgian people, who struck the first blow at German aggression. The stand which they made against the cowardly attack of their powerful neighbour brought home to the whole world the Kaiser's crime in violating the neutrality of a friendly country, and secured the sympathy of the neutral states.

While the siege of the Liège forts was still in progress large bodies of German cavalry were sent across the Meuse to screen the movements of the troops which crossed the river between Liège and Namur, the Belgian Army falling back behind the Dyle River before the German advance. Tirlemont was occupied on the 17th August, Louvain on the 19th, and Brussels entered on the 20th. On the 22nd August the general positions of the opposing armies were as shown in the sketch opposite.

GERMAN CONCENTRATION.¹

1st Army (Kluck)	Five Corps	Oudenarde—Hal.
2nd „ (Bulow)	Three Corps	Warre—Eghezee with outposts at Gembloux.
3rd „ (Hausen)	Three Corps	Huy—Ciney.
4th „ (Duke of Wur- temberg)	Four Corps	Marche—Neufchâteau.
5th „ (Crown Prince of Germany)	Four Corps	Arlon—Luxemburg.
6th „ (Crown Prince of Bavaria)	Four Corps	Thiouville—Metz.
7th „ (General Heer- ingen)	Two Corps	Strassburg.

¹ Altogether there appear to have been concentrated nineteen first-line Corps and six Reserve Corps.

FRENCH CONCENTRATION.

1st Army (General Pau)	Three Corps	Mulhouse—Col . Bonhomme.
2nd „ (Gen. Castel- nau)	Three Corps	St. Dié—Nancy.
3rd „ (Gen. Ruffey)	Three Corps	Montmédy—Mezières
4th „ (Gen. Langle de Cary)	Three Corps	Rocroi—Dinant.
5th „ (Gen. Lanre- zac, subse- quently re- placed by General D'Esperey)	Three Corps	Namur—Charleroi.
6th „ (Gen. Maun- oury)	} . .	Forming in Second Line.
7th „ (Gen. D'Amade)		
8th „ (Gen. D'Urbal)		
9th „ (Gen. Foch)		
10th „ (Gen. Maud'- huy)		
Cavalry Corps (Gen. Sordêt)	. .	Avesnes.

BRITISH CONCENTRATION.

Expeditionary Force (Sir
John French) Two Corps Conde—Mons—Binch
(See Map facing page 26.)

BELGIAN CONCENTRATION.

8 Divisions (King Albert) Malines—Antwerp.
1 Division (General Michel) Namur.
(Positions not shown on the Sketch.)

There is no public information showing the original distribution of Corps in the French Armies, no orders of battle ever having been published, and no reports issued by General Joffre beyond the daily official *communiqués* which have appeared regularly since the 15th August, 1914, these having never given the names of units, or thrown any light on the organisation of the French Armies in the field. What little is known about them is gleaned partly from the dispatches of our own commanders, and partly from unofficial sources of information which are open to private individuals, and to the correspondents of French and British newspapers. Details of the original



OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST 28

British Expeditionary Force which went to France in August 1914 are given at the end of this chapter, and are interesting from an historical point of view, but the changes in the organisation and distribution of Divisions and Brigades have been so frequent that their present constitution bears little if any resemblance to that of August 1914.

While the Germans were concentrating their armies along the northern frontier of France the French Commander-in-Chief directed the Belfort garrison to make a reconnaissance into Upper Alsace in order to ascertain the strength of the enemy's forces between the Vosges and the Rhine.

With this purpose a brigade of French troops left Belfort on the 7th August, and occupied Altkirch on that night without any serious fighting, detaching a force at the same time to Thann. Next day the brigade entered Mulhouse, but on the 9th the 14th German Corps, which was concentrated round Colmar and Neu Breisach, moved towards Mulhouse, an advance guard being sent on to Cernay. Finding his retreat threatened, the French commander fell back on Altkirch on the 10th, and the Germans occupied Mulhouse.

As a result of this reconnaissance General Joffre decided to take the initiative, and by a rapid advance into Alsace and Lorraine seek to obtain possession of the passages over the Rhine before the Germans could concentrate for a counter-attack. Three corps under General Pau were directed to invade Alsace, while three other corps under General Castelnau, were to move into Lorraine and endeavour to separate the army of General Heeringen from that of the Crown Prince of Bavaria. On the 15th August General Joffre transferred his headquarters to Nancy. By the 16th the French had taken possession of the whole of the Vosges passes, and on the 18th General Castelnau's advanced guard reached Saarburg on the main line of railway between Strassburg and Metz. General Pau's advance into Alsace had been equally rapid. Mulhouse had been reoccupied, and the French were threatening Colmar.

On this day, however, the Crown Prince of Bavaria, with the bulk of his army, turned south, and on the 21st defeated General Castelnau's left wing near Château Salins. The French then fell back on Nancy, and the Germans pursuing them over the frontier occupied Lunéville. On the 22nd, owing to the threatening position of the German Armies on the northern frontier, General Joffre decided to abandon the invasion of Alsace, and on the 25th General Pau, after evacuating Mulhouse, withdrew his army behind the Vosges.

The invasion of Alsace and Lorraine has been criticised as having been influenced by political rather than by strategical considerations. The criticism is misplaced, for the French strategy was well conceived, and if the six corps under Generals Pau and Castelnau had been ready to take the offensive in the middle of August, the whole course of the western campaign might have been altered: but they were not ready, while the Germans were. When General Castelnau advanced to the Saar the mobilisation of his three corps was still incomplete, while the German Army of Lorraine, based on Metz, was ready for immediate operation. General Joffre counted on the Meuse fortresses detaining the Germans in Belgium long enough to enable his troops to overrun the Rhine provinces, and threaten the invasion of Bavaria. The thoroughness of the German preparations, and the rapidity with which their armies were concentrated on the northern frontier, upset his calculations, and compelled him to abandon the offensive in order to concentrate for the defence of Paris.

Turning now to the northern frontier of France, the following is a *précis* narrative of the operations of the opposing forces between the 22nd August and the 19th September, when the first phase of the western campaign may be said to have come to an end.

On the morning of the 21st the 2nd and 3rd German Armies attacked the French 5th Army on the Sambre, and by the evening of the 22nd secured all the passages over the river between Namur and Charleroi. The French retired through Philippeville and thence through the *trouée de Chimay*, falling rapidly back till they reached Hirson on the Upper Oise, where they were joined by reinforcements from the south and south-east. At Hirson General Lanrezac was replaced by General d'Esperey. We have been told very little about the operations of this army, or of the 4th and 3rd French Armies on its right during the eventful days of the 22nd–24th August. In the official *communiqué* issued at Nancy at 5.30 p.m. on the 24th August it was briefly stated that “an army” was attacking a German Army in the direction of Neufchâteau, on the right bank of the Semois, that another army was simultaneously attacking the Germans advancing between the Lesse and the Meuse, while a “third army,” supported by the British, was attacking the “German right” between the Sambre and the Meuse.¹ When this bulletin was published the three French

¹ “Une armée partant de la Woëvre septentrionale et se portant sur Neufchâteau (Belgique) attaque les forces Allemandes qui ont défilé dans le Grand-

Armies, those of Ruffey, Langle de Cary, and Lanrezac, were already in full retreat. On the following day, the 25th August, another *communiqué*¹ was issued at 4.55 p.m. in which it was stated that, "*Sur l'ordre du Général Joffre nos troupes et les troupes Anglaises ont pris position sur les emplacements de couverture, qu'elles n'eussent pas quittés si l'admirable effort des Belges ne nous avait pas permis d'entrer en Belgique.*" The detailed narrative of the French operations has yet to be written, and all we at present know is that the 4th French Army, attacked in front by the Duke of Wurtemberg, and in flank by Hausen, fell rapidly back on Rethel, while the 3rd Army retreated before the Crown Prince of Germany towards Chalons, where General Sarrail relieved General Ruffey of his command.

Meanwhile, on the 23rd, General von Kluck, with five corps of the 1st Army, attacked Sir John French, who had been left *en l'air* at Mons, owing to the French retreat on the 22nd, and tried to drive the British Army into the entrenched camp of Maubeuge. Finding himself unsupported, and being informed by General Joffre of the retirement of the French force on his right, the Field-Marshal withdrew his army, on the 24th, to the line St. Waaste-Bavai-Maubeuge, and, continuing his retreat on the 25th, reached the line Cambrai-Le Cateau-Landrecies, where he was joined by the 4th Division. During the night of the 25th the 1st Corps, under General Haig, without resting, retired along the east bank of the Sambre—Oise Canal towards Etreux, where it halted for some hours, and then pushed on through Guise and Ribemont to La Fère, where it arrived on the 28th. The 2nd Corps and 4th Division on the left being hard pressed by the enemy were compelled to stand on the 26th and fight before continuing their retirement. On the afternoon of the 26th General Smith-Dorrien succeeded in getting his troops away south, fighting rearguard actions all the way, till he threw off his pursuers, and joined the 1st Corps

Duché de Luxembourg, et sur la rive droite de la Semois, se portant vers l'ouest. Une autre armée, partie de la région de Sedan, traversant l'Ardenne, attaque les corps Allemands en marche entre la Lesse et la Meuse. Une troisième armée, de la région de Chimay, s'est portée à l'attaque de la droite Allemande entre Sambre et Meuse. Elle est appuyée par l'armée Anglaise partie de la région de Mons. Le mouvement des Allemands, qui avaient cherché à déborder notre aile gauche, a été suivi pas à pas, et leur droite se trouve donc attaquée maintenant par notre armée d'aile gauche en liaison avec l'armée Anglaise. De ce côté la bataille se poursuit vivement depuis plus d'une journée."

¹ In this *communiqué* General Joffre paid a high tribute of praise to the British Army. "Admirable sous le feu, elle a résisté à l'ennemi avec son impassibilité ordinaire."

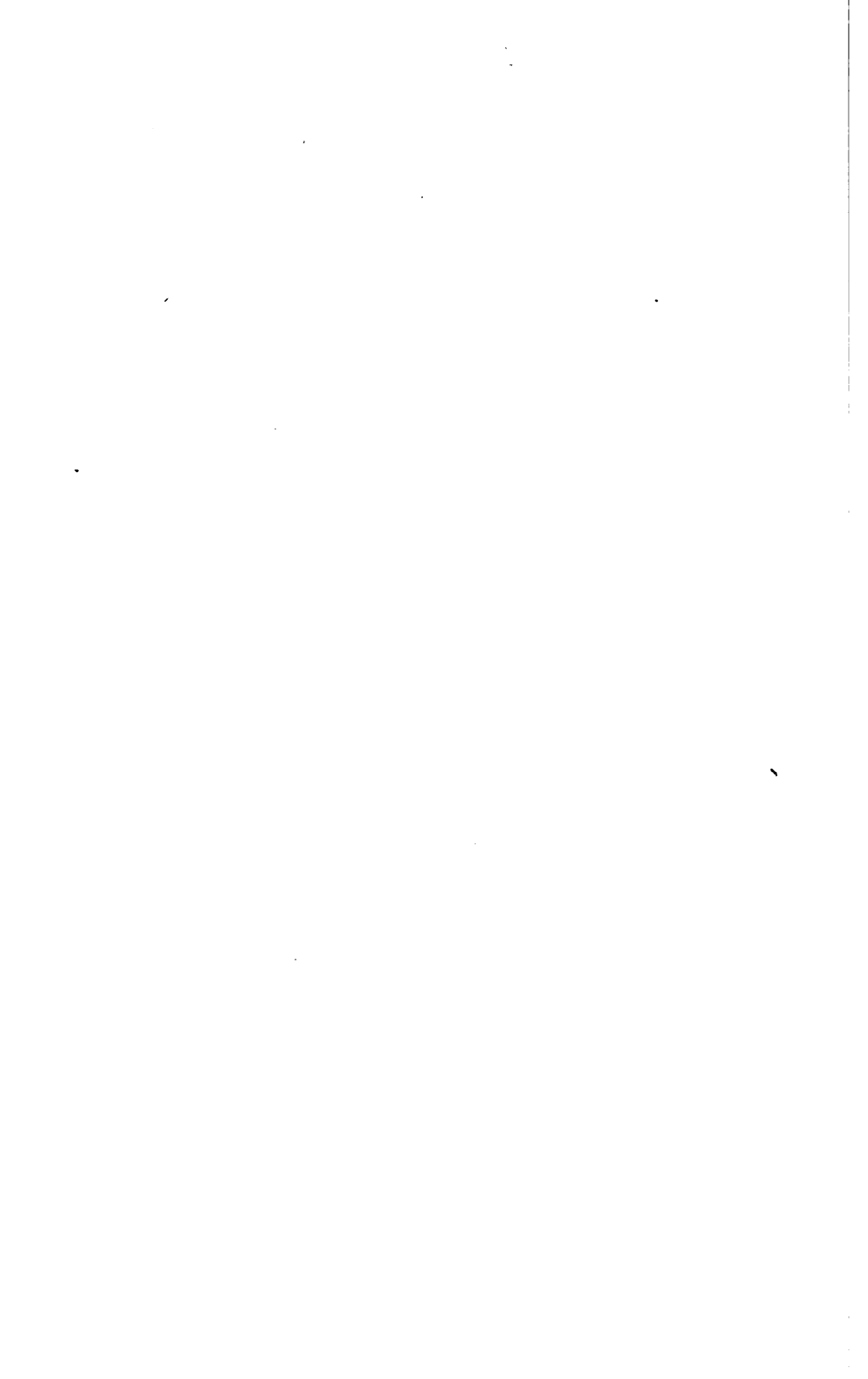
on the 28th, the British Army occupying on that day the line Noyon-Chauny-La Fère.¹

When the German Armies began to move south on the 21st the French concentration was clearly incomplete. It has always been the intention of the French staff to wait for the Germans on the line Lille-Valenciennes-Hirson, the advance to the Sambre only being an afterthought due to the call for help from the Belgians. Left to himself, and with only military necessities to consult, General Joffre would not have disturbed his original plan of campaign, which had for its object to draw the Germans into France, and when their lines of communication had been dangerously lengthened out, force them to fight at strategical disadvantage, which, after a successful battle would have endangered their safe retreat to the Rhine. As it was he went to the help of the Belgians before he was ready to take the offensive, and by so doing he allowed the initiative to pass out of his hands into those of his enemy.

Sir John French's retreat from Mons was a masterly operation of war, which has rarely been equalled, and never surpassed, in the history of the British Army. Including his cavalry and artillery, the Field-Marshal had at most 80,000 fighting men and with this comparatively small force he marched sixty-four miles in four days, averaging sixteen miles a day. This would have been good marching at any time, but seeing that the British Army was hotly pursued during the whole of its retreat by a German force of more than three times its strength, what Sir John French and his brave men did is little short of a miracle. He not only got his army away unbroken and unshaken, but he hit his pursuers so hard as to cripple their offensive power and compel them to halt for rest. The strategical effect of this brilliant piece of work cannot be exaggerated, for it saved the left wing of the Allied Armies from being rolled up, and thrown back in disorder on the French centre. At the end of the fourth day of his pursuit, after all the lives he had thrown away in his reckless effort to destroy the British force, General von Kluck had nothing to show. His strategy was a failure. He had lost much, and gained nothing. If General Lemane inflicted the first blow on the German invaders, Sir John French

¹ In his dispatch of the 7th September, 1914, Field-Marshal Sir John French wrote as follows regarding the fine generalship displayed by General Smit-Dorrien on the 26th August: "I say without hesitation, that the saving of the left wing of the army under my command on the morning of the 26th August could never have been accomplished unless a commander of rare and unusual coolness, intrepidity, and determination, had been present to personally conduct the operation."





delivered the second, and with equally powerful effect. By turning round on all occasions to fight a series of delaying actions he gained time for the French Armies of the right and centre to retire on their reinforcements, and time was all that was needed. Both tactically and strategically the British retreat from Mons was an all-round success, which General Joffre was the first to recognise when he sent his generous letter of thanks to Sir John French after he had thrown off the pursuit.

This is the time to praise, not criticise, but there are some points connected with this memorable retreat which seem to require explanation. Why, in the first place, was Sir John French not informed before 5 p.m. on the 23rd that the French Army on his right had fallen back from the Sambre on the evening of the 22nd? If the Field-Marshal had been told this overnight, as he easily could have been, he would have begun his retirement at daybreak on the 23rd instead of standing to fight at Mons, where he was left unsupported either on his right or left. Then, again, it is difficult to know how to defend the refusal of General Sordét to come to the aid of the British troops during their retirement. Early on the 24th Sir John French visited the French General, who had three Cavalry Divisions under his command close to Avesnes, and only ten miles from Landrecies, which place was on the line of retreat of the 1st British Corps. At the interview the Field-Marshal "earnestly requested the co-operation" of the French cavalry, but General Sordét put him off with an evasive answer, saying he must consult his army commander as to whether he might comply with the request, but in no case could he move till the 25th as his horses were "tired." As a matter of fact, for whatever cause, he did not move till the 27th, although, on the 26th, when General Smith-Dorrien was in great danger of being overwhelmed by General von Kluck's furious onslaught, a second "urgent message" was sent to him to come to the assistance of the British Army. The request was again refused, as "owing to the fatigue of his horses the General found himself unable to interfere in any way."¹ It seems strange that out of three French Cavalry Divisions General Sordét should not have been able to detail a few squadrons, at any rate, to go to the aid of General Smith-Dorrien, who was bearing the whole brunt of the German attack. A further matter requires elucidation. In his dispatch of the 7th September, Sir John French informed us that General d'Amade moved down from Arras

¹ Dispatch of Field-Marshal Sir John French, G.C.B., etc., dated September 7th, 1914. *London Gazette*, September 10th.

with two French reserve Divisions on the 27th, and "took much of the pressure off the rear of the British forces." It has not yet been explained why this relief was not given on the 26th, the "critical day" of the retreat, when, by marching to the sound of the guns, General d'Amade could have brought a reinforcement of two Divisions to the hardly pressed 2nd Corps of the British Army. Arras is only twenty miles from Cambrai.

The above remarks are made, not for the purpose of criticising our Allies, who are fighting as heroically as British soldiers are against the common foe, but to show the need for co-operative orders being given so as to ensure mutual support of one corps by another at any given threatened point. On this occasion there was a distinct want of the required co-operation, and this at a time when the safety of the whole Allied Army depended on the amount of resistance which two British Corps could oppose to General von Kluck in his attempt to overwhelm them. Had he succeeded, the most disastrous consequences must have followed his success, for the centre and right of the French Army would have been cut off from their retreat behind the Marne.

It has been suggested that it would have been more in accordance with our political interests if the British Army had been landed in Belgium, instead of in France, in order to co-operate with the Belgian Army. We are primarily and ostensibly fighting in defence of Belgian neutrality, for which we have made ourselves responsible by treaty. Could not we best fulfil the purpose of our intervention by leaving the French to fight the Germans in front while we sent our army to attack them in rear? There is something to be said for this proposal, but military necessity prevented its adoption. The Expeditionary Force could not have been taken up the Scheldt to Antwerp without violating Dutch neutrality, and there was no other defended base on the Belgian coast. Our troops might have been landed at Ostend, but the operation would have taken some time owing to the want of disembarkation facilities; and in any case, failing the success of the French to repel the German invasion, they would have been left *en l'air*, exposed to the attack of a superior German force, without a safe base to fall back upon, and with no chance of being able to retreat in order to obtain a new one. If the present situation, which has resulted from a German advance followed by a German retreat, could have been anticipated the case would have been altered, but at the time when the Expeditionary Force was

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landed in France no other course was open to Sir John French except the one which he followed.

In accordance with General Joffre's plans for a general retreat behind the Marne Sir John French continued his retirement down the Oise on the 29th of August, supported by the 6th French Army operating on his left,¹ the German 1st Army being still in close pursuit. He reached Compiègne on the 30th, and next day continued his march southwards towards Meaux, covered by a rearguard composed of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, and Guards Infantry Brigade. On the 2nd he crossed the Marne at Meaux, and on the 3rd reached the Grand Morin, where he halted on the line Lagny—Signy—Signets to rest and refit. On this day, with the exception of the 6th French Army, which was covering Paris on the north-west, the whole of the Allied Armies, who had been retiring before the German advance, were south of the Marne. All details concerning the composition and positions of the French Armies have been so far withheld from public knowledge, but we know from Sir John French's report that the 5th French Army was on his immediate right, and the 6th on his left, while a new French Army (the 9th), composed of three corps under General Foch, moved into the space between the right of the 5th and left of the 4th Armies.

The position of the German Armies on this date was much as follows. The 1st Army was at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre and west of it, a strong flanking force having been left to watch the passages over the Ourcq. The 2nd Army, after occupying Rheims, was near Château Thierry with the 8rd Army prolonging the line to the left. The 4th Army under the Duke of Wurtemberg was in the neighbourhood of Suippes, and the Crown Prince with the 5th Army was advancing through the east of the Argonne Forest to St. Ménéhould. On the eastern frontier the position was much as it had been for some weeks. One French Army was watching the Crown Prince of Bavaria, who was trying to break through the French line at Nancy, and another was facing General Heeringen in the neighbourhood of St. Dié.

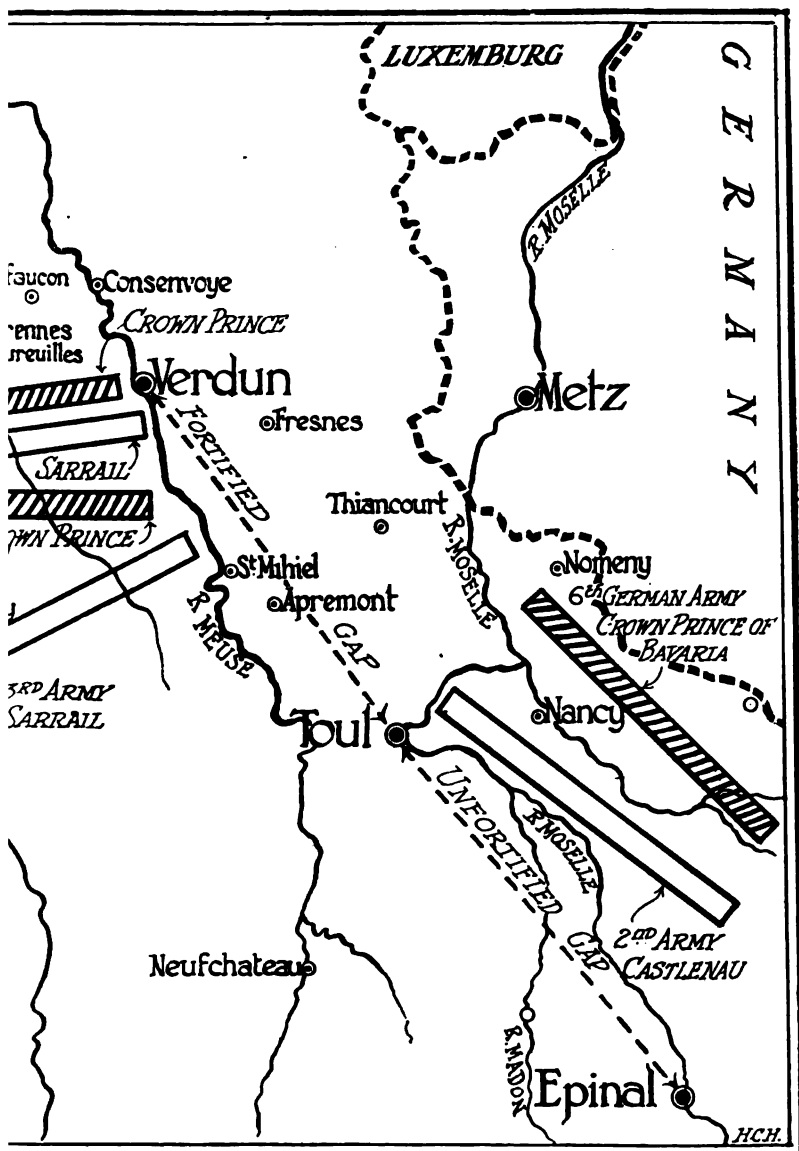
On the 4th of September the German Commander, after twenty-four hours' hesitation, suddenly changed his plans. Having failed to envelop the left wing of the Allied Armies,

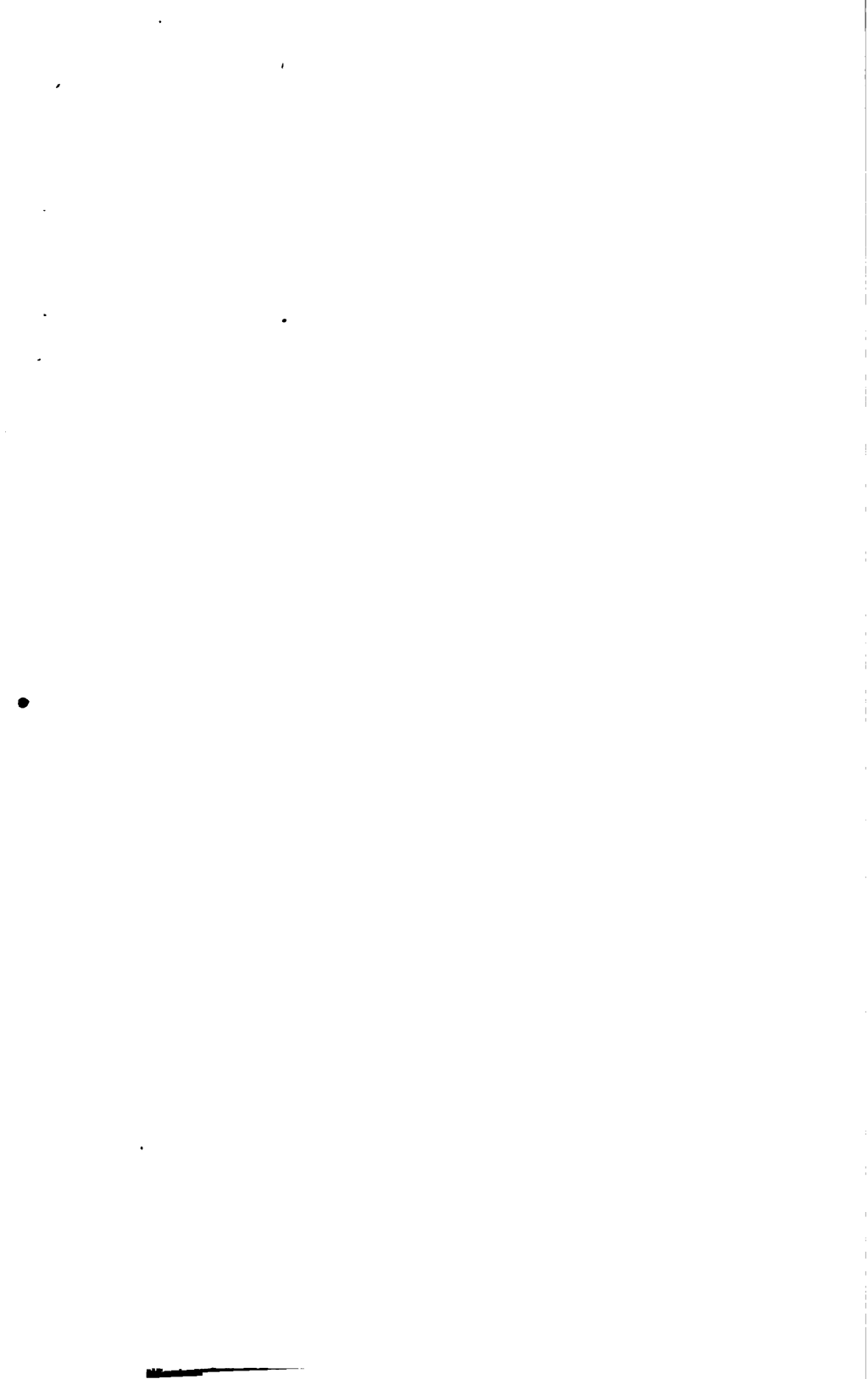
¹ The terms "right" and "left" are always used in their application to the original front of the Allied Armies facing the invaders. Similarly, when writing of the "right" and "left" of the German Armies, the reference is to their right and left as they advanced into French territory.

he determined, acting probably under superior orders, to try to cut this wing off from the French centre and right by interposing his army between the 5th French Army and the remainder of the Allied forces on its right. Turning away from Paris, he directed the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Armies to change their direction from south to south-east, and march diagonally across the front of the British Army on the Grand Morin. On the 5th he continued this movement, large bodies of German troops crossing the Marne at La Ferté and Château Thierry, and by the evening of the 6th the three first German Armies were echeloned in positions south of the Marne. On this day the Duke of Wurtemberg's Army reached Vitry, and the Crown Prince St. Ménéhould.

The 5th and 6th days of September were as eventful for the Allies as they were fatal for the Germans. In marching across the British front in order to attack the 5th French Army on its right, General von Kluck did what Napoleon said a commander never should attempt to do even with a superior force. In executing this manoeuvre the German General exposed his own right to attack, and at a moment when his advancing columns were heading away from their communications up the Oise river. The movement was a strategical error and Kluck paid dearly for his mistake.

On Monday the Allies took the offensive all along the line and this time the co-operation between the French and British forces was complete. Acting together, and on a pre-arranged plan, General Joffre and Sir John French struck hard, and quick, and boldly. The bulk of the 1st German Army was massed in the salient formed by the Ourcq and Grand Morin tributaries of the Marne, which river ran through the centre of the German position. Against this salient Sir John French moving from the south and General Maunoury from the west threw the whole of their troops, and after a three days' battle in which the Germans suffered enormous loss, the right wing of the German Army was driven over the Marne in a disorderly retreat. On the right the French were equally successful in their attack, and by the night of the 10th no part of the German Army was left south of the Marne. On the 11th the pursuit was continued, the Germans falling back very rapidly before the Allies, leaving 6000 prisoners and a great quantity of material in the hands of the pursuing troops. On this day the 8th French Army captured the artillery of a whole German corps. Owing to bad weather the pursuit slackened on the 12th, and the Germans managed to cross the Aisne river un-





molested, and took up strong positions to the north of it before the Allies could reach them.

On the 15th September the general situation was much as follows. The first four German Armies were occupying positions on a 100-mile front a few miles north of the Aisne river extending from near Noyon on the Oise to Ville-sur-Tourbe, west of the Argonne Forest. On the east of the Argonne the Crown Prince's Army had fallen back to the Meuse north of the entrenched camp of Verdun, having taken up a defensive position covering his line of retreat through the Duchy of Luxemburg.

The German plan of campaign had failed, and failed beyond the hope of recovery. Success depended on a series of rapid and decisive blows being struck at the French Army in the first few weeks of the campaign. The blows were struck, but for every blow given one was returned, and the Germans were hit harder themselves than they were able to hit their adversaries. The reckless tactics of their commanders were the occasion of such an appalling loss of life that the offensive power of the German Army for the time being was completely shattered. When mobile armies begin to entrench it is the signal either for surrender, or for retreat, and this is what the Germans must sooner or later face as a consequence of their failure. Owing to the increased power of the defensive in modern war retirement may be delayed for weeks and even months, but its eventual necessity is inevitable, for the Germans have relinquished the initiative, which has passed into the hands of the Allies, and though the latter may not yet be ready to take the offensive, all they require is time in which to develop their resources and consolidate their strength.

Causes of Failure.

What are the causes of the German failure? They are moral quite as much as material. Failure is first of all due to an overweening confidence, which, in the pride of its insolence, maximised Germany's strength, and minimised that of her neighbours—

"My eye's too quick, my heart o'erweens too much,
Unless my hand and strength could equal them."

The Kaiser thought to frighten the Belgians into letting him violate their neutrality which they held so dear. He failed to reckon with the spirit of patriotism which burns as strongly in the Belgian as in the German breast. The crime which the

Kaiser committed was punished by a military check which pulled up the German Army at the outset of the campaign—Liège dealt the first and hardest blow of all to the Kaiser's plans.

Then came the British stand at Mons with the retreat to the Marne. By the ability of its leaders, and the courage of its soldiers, the "contemptible little army," which Sir John French commanded, struck the second blow at the invader, and one from which the German Army can never recover. At Creil, on the 8rd of September, after the Field-Marshal had brought his pursuers to a standstill by sheer force of the punishment he inflicted, General Kluck was an altered man. He knew he was beaten, and he acted as though he knew it. He had shot his bolt, and had met his master. Thenceforth, quality was going to count for more than quantity. "The German troops," writes Sir John French, "will not face our infantry fire. . . . The cavalry do as they like to the enemy. . . . The German patrols simply fly before our horsemen." Man for man, the British "mercenary" has proved himself a better fighter than the German conscript. The sense of superiority established at the outset of the campaign is an asset of incalculable worth, and will give strength to our troops to go on with the war till the purpose for which they are fighting has been fully and finally accomplished.

The courage of our French Allies is beyond all praise. Though surprised by the unprovoked attack made on them they were not dismayed. The Generals kept their heads, and the soldiers their *moral*. In battle they are fighting with a heroism which is inspired by the sense of a righteous cause. The concentration of their armies was not so rapid as that of the Germans, and this they recognised from the first. Like Fabius before him, General Joffre had to play a waiting game. With a less prudent Commander the French might have had to endure another Sedan. The decision to retire from the Sambre was taken at the right moment, and before it was too late. No praise is too high for the masterly manner in which the French Armies were withdrawn from the front when faced by superior numbers. The retreat was always orderly, and never hurried. On their way to the Marne the French troops gave as good as they took, and when they fell back on their reinforcements, they did so with unshaken confidence in the General who had taken them out of danger in order to lead them back to victory. We are proud of our Allies, who are as determined as we are to fight this war to a finish, which for them means the recovery of their lost

provinces, and the punishment of those who have disturbed their peace.

The more we read of this war the greater we feel the necessity for destroying the power which has brought it about. It is a war of moral right against physical might, and no other words than these can describe the issue. The Kaiser's plea for "a draw" has fallen on deaf ears. The war which he made will continue till his power to do evil is broken down beyond the possibility of recovery. What the Allies mean to "crush" is not the German nation, but the spirit of militarism which has debauched the German people. Conscription, which was originally instituted for the defence of hearth and home, has been degraded by the Kaiser into a means for waging aggressive war. Militarism and conscription go hand in hand together, and the one cannot be killed if the other is allowed to live. An end must be put to both, and this can be done by agreement between the Allies, but until it is done all talk about the destruction of militarism is but as sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal.

BRITISH EXPED

Commander-in-Chief: Field-Marshal

Chief of the General Staff: Lieut.-Gen. Sir A. J. MURRAY, K.C.B.

Quartermaster-General: Lieut.-Gen.

1st Army Corps: Lieut.-Gen. Sir Douglas Haig, K.C.B.					
1st Division. Lieut.-Gen. S. H. Lomax.			2nd Division. Major-Gen. C. O. Monro, C.B.		
1st Brigade. B.-Gen. F. I. Maxse, C.B.	2nd Brigade. B.-Gen. R. S. Bullfin, C.B.	3rd Brigade. B.-Gen. H. J. S. Landon, C.B.	4th Brigade. B.-Gen. R. Scott-Kerr, D.S.O.	5th Brigade. B.-Gen. R. O. B. Haking, C.B.	6th Brigade. B.-Gen. R. H. Davies, C.B.
1st Coldstream Guards. 1st Scots Guards. 1st R. High- landers. 2nd Batt. Mun- ster Fusiliers.	2nd Sussex. 1st Northumber- lands. 1st Loyal N. Lancs. 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps.	1st West Sur- reys. 1st S. Wales Borderers. 1st Gloucesters. 2nd Welsh.	2nd Grenadier Guards. 2nd Coldstream Guards. 3rd Coldstream Guards. 1st Irish Guards.	2nd Worcesters. 2nd Oxford L.I. 2nd Highland L.I. 2nd Connaughts.	1st Liverpool. 2nd S. Stafford- shire. 1st Berkshire. 1st King's Royal Rifles.

2nd Army Corps: Lieut.-Gen. W. P. Pulteney, C.B.					
4th Division. Major-Gen. T. D'O. Snow, C.B.			6th Division. Major-Gen. J. L. Keir, C.B.		
10th Brigade. B.-Gen. J. A. L. Haldane, C.B.	11th Brigade. B.-Gen. A. G. Hunter- Weston, C.B.	12th Brigade. B.-Gen. H. F. M. Wilson, C.B.	16th Brigade. B.-Gen. C. Williams.	17th Brigade. B.-Gen. W. R. B. Doran, C.B.	18th Brigade. B.-Gen. W. N. Osmegrove, V.C., C.B.
1st Warwick- shire. 2nd Seaforth Highlanders. 2nd Dublin Fusiliers. 1st Irish Rifles.	1st Somerset- shire. 1st R. Lancas- hire. 1st Hampshire. 1st R. Brigade.	1st R. Lancas- ter. 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers. 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Essex.	1st R. Kent. 1st Leicester. 1st Shropshire L.I. 2nd York and Lancaster.	1st R. Fusiliers. 1st N. Stafford- shire. 2nd Leicester. 3rd R. Brigade.	1st West Yorks. 1st East Yorks. 2nd Notts and Derby. 2nd Durham L.I.

DIVISIONAL TROOPS.

Cavalry.—1 squadron with each Division.

Artillery.—9 18-pounder batteries, 3 howitzer batteries and 1 heavy battery with each Division.

1 Horse Artillery battery with each Cavalry Brigade.

Engineers.—3 field companies with each Division.

Army Service Corps.—1 divisional train with each Division.

R.A.M.C.—3 field ambulances with each Division.

Note.—The 1st and 2nd Army Corps with Cavalry Division landed in France on the 16th August, and were concentrated on the line Conde-Mons-Briche on the evening of the 31st.

The 4th Division detrained at Le Oiseau on the 23rd August, and the 6th Division joined Sir John French's Army on the Aisne on the 16th September.

IONARY FORCE.

ir J. D. P. FRENCH, G.C.B., etc.

Adjutant-General: Lieut.-Gen. Sir C. F. N. MACREADY, K.C.B.

ir W. R. ROBERTSON, K.C.V.O.

2nd Army Corps: General Sir Horace L. Smith-Dorrien, G.C.B.

3rd Division.			5th Division.		
Major-Gen. Sir Hubert I. W. Hamilton, C.B.			Major-Gen. Sir Charles Fergusson, Bart, C.B.		
<i>7th Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. F. W. N. McCracken, C.B.	<i>8th Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. B. J. O. Doran, C.B.	<i>9th Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. F. O. Shaw, C.B.	<i>13th Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. G. J. Outhbert, C.B.	<i>14th Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. S. P. Roit, C.B.	<i>15th Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. Count Gleichen, K.C.V.O.
3rd Worcester. 2nd S. Lancashire. 1st Wilt. 2nd R. I. Rifles.	2nd Royal Scots. 2nd R. I. Rifles. 4th Middlesex. 1st Gordon Highlanders.	1st Northumberland Fusiliers. 4th R. Fusiliers. 1st Lincolnshire. 1st R. Scots Fusiliers.	2nd K. O. Scottish Borderers. 2nd W. Riding. 1st West Kent. 2nd Yorkshire L.I.	2nd Suffolk. 1st East Surrey. 1st D. of Cornwall's L.I. 2nd Manchester.	1st Norfolk. 1st Bedfordshire. 1st Cheshire. 1st Dorsetshire.

Cavalry Division: Lieut.-Gen. B. H. H. Allenby, C.B.				
<i>1st Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. C. J. Briggs, C.B.	<i>2nd Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. H. de B. de Lisle, C.B.	<i>3rd Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. H. de la P. Gough, C.B.	<i>4th Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. The Hon. C. B. Bingham, C.V.O.	<i>5th Brigade.</i> B.-Gen. Sir P. W. Chetwode, C.B.
2nd D. Guards. 5th D. Guards. 11th Hussars.	4th D. Guards. 9th Lancers. 18th Hussars.	4th Hussars. 5th Lancers. 16th Lancers.	Household Cavalry. 6th D. Guards. 3rd Hussars.	2nd Dragoons. 13th Lancers. 30th Hussars.

Lines of Communication Troops.

Infantry.—1st Middlesex Regiment, 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 2nd Welsh Fusiliers, 1st Scottish Rifles, 1st Devonshire Regiment.¹
Engineers.—8th and 10th Railway Companies, 39th Works Company, 20th and 42nd Transport Companies, 1st Printing Company.
Royal Flying Corps.—2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Aeroplane Squadrons, Aircraft Park.
Army Service Corps.—1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Supply Columns.
R. A. M. C.—1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Clearing Hospitals. 13 Stationary Hospitals, and 6 General Hospital Units, 6 Ambulance trains, 3 Hospital Ships, 11 Sanitary Squadrons, and Convalescent Depot.
Ordnance.—1 Cavalry and 6 Divisional Ammunition Parks. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Ordnance Companies.

¹ These four battalions were subsequently formed into the 19th Brigade which joined the 2nd Army Corps at Valenciennes on the 24th August.

CHAPTER III

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE EAST

August 7th to November 7th

1914

Topography of the eastern theatre of war—Russian concentration—Rennenkampf invades East Prussia—Threatens Königsberg—Samsonoff's defeat at Tannenberg—Russians retreat to the Niemen—Hindenburg's pursuit—Rennenkampf turns on his pursuers—Germans defeated at Augustovo—Austro-Hungarian concentration in Galicia—Russian strategy—Rusky interposes his army between the 1st and 2nd Austrian armies—Defeat of 2nd Austrian Army—Russians occupy Lemberg—Defeat of 1st Austrian Army—Investment of Przemyśl—German concentration on the Wartha—Hindenburg invades Poland—His defeat on the Middle Vistula—German retreat behind the Wartha—Success of Russian strategy.

THE strategical problem in the eastern theatre of war was of longer and more complex dimensions than that in the west. The sketch-map accompanying this chapter will serve to illustrate its salient factors, the chief one of which is the geographical position of Russian Poland, jutting out like a huge bastion into German territory, flanked by East Prussia on the north, and by Galicia on the south. Kalisz, the frontier town of Poland, is only 180 miles as the crow flies from Berlin, and this is not much farther than Brussels is from Paris; but before a Russian invasion of Germany can take place either through Posen or Silesia, or along any other route leading to the German capital, both strategical flanks must be secured, and herein lay the magnitude of the problem which the Grand Duke Nicholas was given to solve.

Another factor of importance is the existence of the many rivers which traverse the eastern theatre of war, and which, owing to their breadth and depth, and to the force of their currents, form formidable obstacles to the passage of troops across their banks. There is, first of all, the Vistula river, which rises in the western Carpathian mountains near the Jablunka Pass, forming the southern frontier of Poland till it reaches Zawichost, near Sandomier, when it begins to flow north to Warsaw, splitting Poland into two halves, and then finding

its way through the province of West Prussia down to the Baltic Sea at Danzig. It is necessary for the Russians to secure possession of the whole line of the Vistula before attempting to invade Germany. On the German side of the Russian frontier is the Oder, another mighty waterway, which rises only a few miles from the source of the Vistula, and, flowing nearly parallel to, and at a distance of some 150 miles from, the Vistula, makes its way through the German provinces of Silesia and Brandenburg till it reaches the sea at Stettin. The Oder is Berlin's defensive barrier on the east, just as the Rhine acts in the same capacity on the west. Athwart the river at two important railway junctions are the fortresses of Küstrin and Glogau, both of which will have to be subdued before Berlin can be reached.

The Warta, a tributary of the Oder, is another river which has already entered into the strategy of the campaign, as also have the Bug and San rivers, which are both tributaries of the Vistula, as well as the Narew and the Niemen, which latter river forms the line of Russian defence from a force coming across the East Prussian frontier. The San river rises in the Carpathian mountains near the Uszok Pass, and joins its waters with those of the Vistula at Zawichost, where the two rivers coming together form a salient position, the flanks of which rest on the two entrenched camps of Przemyśl and Cracow. The Vistula-San salient has been used by the Austrians throughout the campaign as a base both for the defence of Galicia and for the offensive operations which they undertook at the beginning of the war when they invaded Poland.

A glance at the map shows how great is the initial advantage which the Germans and Austrians, but especially the Germans, enjoy owing to the superiority of their railway communications over those of the Russians. On the Russian side of the frontier along the whole length of the 500 mile front from Memel to Cracow there are only seven railway lines leading from the interior of Poland to the German frontier—those from Kovno to Eydtkunnen, Bielstock to Lyck, Warsaw to Soldau, Warsaw to Thorn, Warsaw to Kalisz, Warsaw to Czeszochowa, and Ivangorod to Myslowitch, the point where the three Empires meet. On the German side there is a perfect network of railways converging on Poland, all connected together by a strategical line running along the frontier, enabling troops to be moved from one point to another with an ease which is denied to the Russians, since their railways are not laterally joined together by connecting lines. The inferiority of the Russian as compared with the German and Austrian railway

systems has had a marked effect on the conduct of the campaign in the eastern theatre of war throughout the whole of the operations which have taken place since the war began.

The concentration of the Russian Armies was arranged to take place behind the Bug, the Narew, and the Niemen. The separate armies were mobilised, and concentrated as follows:

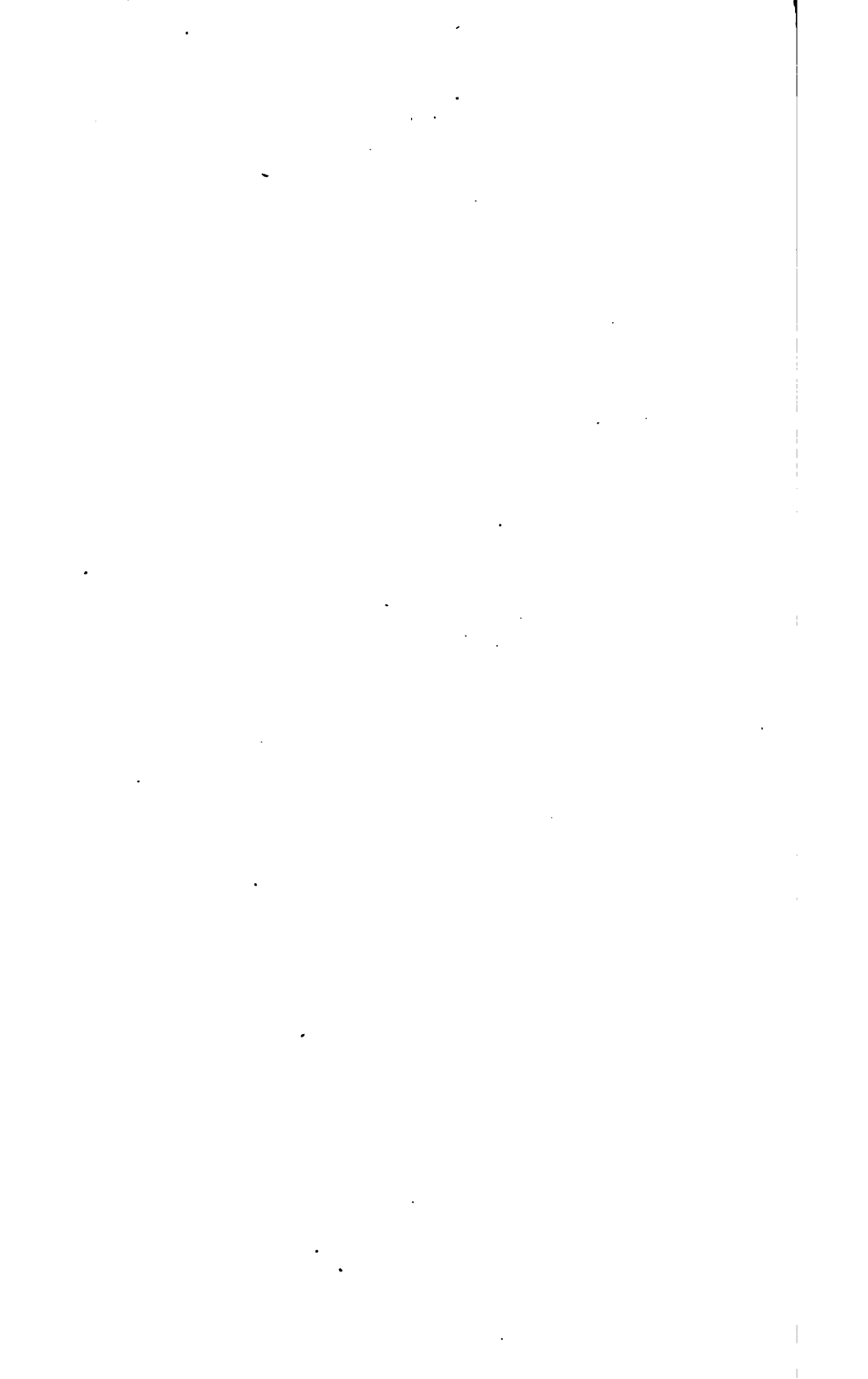
Army of the Niemen	General Rennenkampf	Kovno-Grodno.
Army of the Narew	General Samsonoff	Echeloned along the Narew.
		Warsaw-Mlawa
Army of Poland	General Ivanoff	Brest Litovsk-Chernovitz.
1st Galician Army	General Ruzsky	Lutsk-Rovno.
2nd Galician Army	General Brusiloff	Opposite Tarnopol.

Various estimates have been made of the strength of the Russian armies when the campaign opened, but in the absence of official data it is impossible to verify them, and no figures of their fighting strength are given in this chapter. The armies of the Niemen and Narew had been semi-mobilised for several months before the declaration of war, and Generals Rennenkampf and Samsonoff were both ready to take the field at the beginning of the first week in August. Much to the surprise of the German General Staff the mobilisation of the other Russian Armies was carried out with unexpected rapidity, and by the middle of August the bulk of General Ivanoff's troops were assembled at their concentration rendezvous, while the armies of Generals Ruzsky and Brusiloff came into line a few days later.

The concentration of the enemy's forces was approximately as follows. Opposed to Generals Rennenkampf and Samsonoff was the German General von François who had at most three Corps under his command, and these were distributed along the East Prussian frontier without regard to the necessity of concentrating to resist an attack coming across the Niemen and Narew. Two Austro-Hungarian Armies were concentrated in Galicia, a First Army under command of General Dankl and a Second Army under General Auffenberg, the First Army being in the salient formed by the Vistula and San rivers with its left resting on Cracow, and its right on the fortress of Przemyśl, while the Second Army was concentrated at right angles to the First Army and covered the approaches to Lemberg from the east. Altogether fifteen Corps were brought into Galicia during the first three weeks of August, and by the end of the month there were not less than 800,000 men in the front line or in reserve north of the Carpathian mountains.

General Rennenkampf was the first to take the field. The





day after the declaration of war his cavalry crossed the frontier, cut the strategical railway at Lyck, and pushed back the German outposts towards the lakes. Crossing the frontier with his main body at Suwalki and Wirballen on the 7th he attacked and defeated von François near Insterburg on the 16th.¹ Von François fell back on Königsberg. Meanwhile Samsonoff, advancing from the south-west of the Masurian lakes, attacked the German 20th Corps at Frankenau on the 20th, defeating it with heavy loss, and driving the beaten Germans in disorder towards Königsberg. Samsonoff entered Allenstein on the 25th and after deploying his army west of that town between the Thorn-Soldau and Thorn-Alenstein railways sent out his cavalry towards the Vistula. The whole of East Prussia was in Russian hands, and with the great bulk of the German Army committed to the invasion of France the situation looked promising for our Allies.

Rennenkampf's victory on the 16th August had, however, alarmed the German General Staff, who took immediate steps to check the Russian invasion, and reconquer the lost province. Von François was replaced by General Hindenburg, who was brought back from the retired list to take command of the German Army of the east. Hindenburg had formerly been in command of the 1st Corps at Königsberg, when he acquired an intimate knowledge of the topographical conditions of East Prussia, a knowledge which he speedily turned to good account. In an incredibly short space of time he collected an army of 200,000 men on the lower Vistula, and marched against Samsonoff. On the 26th, while holding up Samsonoff's advance to Osterode his right wing occupied Soldau, and intercepted the Russian line of retreat into Poland. On the 27th Hindenburg, concentrating on his left, drove the Russians out of Allenstein, and threw Samsonoff's right wing back on his centre in and round Tannenberg. The enveloping movement was completely successful. Entangled in the lakes and morasses into which they had been driven, the Russians fought valiantly for three days under hopeless conditions, and then the end came. On the 31st August Samsonoff was killed with two of his Corps Commanders, and his fine army of five Corps practically annihilated: 90,000 prisoners fell into the hands of the Germans and nearly the whole of the guns of the army. Out of 200,000

¹ It should here be stated that no attempt is anywhere made in this volume to enter into tactical details of battles, the object being only to describe the strategical movements of the opposing forces, and summarise the tactical results which followed on the movements.

men not more than 80,000 succeeded in escaping. The victory was decisive, and settled the fate of East Prussia.

Samsonoff's defeat at Tannenberg was due partly to overconfidence, partly also to defective intelligence. He had won an easy victory on the 20th, and he trusted to luck rather than to prudent generalship to take him on his way to the Vistula. Up to the morning of the 26th he was unaware of the presence of a large German force on his front, and until Hindenburg siezed Soldau he had no warning of impending danger. This was the fault of his airmen and cavalry, who failed to discover the German concentration till Hindenburg had got within striking distance of the Russian Army. When the facts of the situation were revealed Samsonoff made the mistake of offering battle in a position which was neither defensible nor adapted for offensive tactics. The rash strategy of the Russian commander, and his faulty decision to fight when he ought to have retreated, were the causes which led to this deplorable disaster at the opening of the campaign.

Without losing time Hindenburg started off in pursuit of the retreating Russians, whereupon Rennenkampf abandoned his movement on Königsberg, and fell rapidly back on the Niemen. Hindenburg went after him, and deploying his army on the line Wirballen-Swalki marched straight for the Niemen without waiting for his heavy artillery to come up. On the 20th September he secured his right flank by the investment of Osowitz, and on the 21st his advanced guards reached the Niemen between Olita and Grodno. Next day his engineers began to throw bridges over the river, but these were destroyed one after the other by the Russian artillery, and on the 28th Hindenburg decided to retreat. Then Rennenkampf turned on his pursuers, harassing their retreat back to their frontier, and overtaking the main German force at Augustovo, where he inflicted a severe defeat on Hindenburg's troops, and forced them to retire to their prepared positions immediately west of the Masurian lakes.

Hindenburg's movement to the Niemen was premature. When he crossed the Russian frontier he left his railways behind him, and got out of reach either of reinforcements or supplies. His force was insufficient for the invasion of Russia, while his adversary had fallen back on reinforcements which were awaiting his arrival on the Niemen. When he saw his error he was quick to correct it, his retreat being a masterly achievement which secured him possession of East Prussia, and gave him time to prepare for a future offensive.

Turning now to the position in Poland and Galicia, the following is a brief narrative of the operations which led up to the fall of Lemberg and the Russian conquest of Eastern Galicia. The Austrian mobilisation arrangements came up to expectation, and by the second week in August the concentration of the 1st Austrian Army under General Dankl was sufficiently advanced to enable him to take the offensive. On the 10th his advanced guards crossed the Galician frontier, and deployed on the right bank of the Middle Vistula, General Ivanoff's cavalry and outpost troops falling back on defensive positions covering the approaches to the Cholm-Lublin railway. Meanwhile General Ruszky, whose army was in a formal state of preparation, developed a rapid offensive movement against the 2nd Austrian Army covering Lemberg under the command of General Auffenberg. On the 14th August he occupied Sokal, and continuing his movement succeeded in placing his army between the two Austrian Armies, while General Brusiloff, advancing up the left bank of the Dniester, reached the line Tarnopol-Halicz on the 28th, and effected a junction with Ruszky, who was threatening Lemberg from the north-east. This sealed the fate of Lemberg. On the 1st September the two Russian generals attacked Auffenberg simultaneously, and rolled up both wings of his army. The Austrian commander evacuated Lemberg on the 8rd, and fell back on the Grodek position a few miles west of the town. On the same day General Ruszky entered the town, and appointed General Bobrinsky governor. By this time General Ivanoff's concentration having been completed, he attacked General Dankl on the 6th, and after a six-day battle finally defeated him near Rawa Ruska, taking 100,000 prisoners and an immense quantity of war material. Both Austrian Armies then fell back behind the San, and the Russians invested Przemyśl. By the 15th September the whole of Eastern Galicia was in Russian occupation, and Russian Armies were threatening Cracow both north and south of the Vistula.

When the news of the Austrian defeat in Poland reached the Kaiser he ordered a large German Army of eighteen corps to concentrate on the line Thorn-Czestochowa-Cracow, with the intention of opposing the Russians, who had begun to move westwards across the Vistula and San rivers. German officers were meanwhile sent to Cracow to rally the beaten Austrian Army, which was to act on the right of the German Army, throw the Russians in Galicia back across the San river, and relieve Przemyśl. By the first week in October an Austro-

German Army, reported to be 1,000,000 strong, was concentrated on the above-mentioned front, under the command of General Hindenburg, whose headquarters were shifted from East Prussia to Czystochowa. The army advanced very rapidly through Poland and Galicia, the Germans moving in two columns, one north of the Pilitza river, the other south of it, the Austrian Army, under General Dankl, prolonging the line to the right of the Germans down to the Carpathian mountains. Warsaw was the objective of the northern German column, Ivangorod of the southern column, the rôle of the Austrians being to clear Galicia. Falling back according to traditional custom before the German advance, the Russians awaited the enemy behind the Vistula, and then attacked the advancing columns with great energy, defeating the northern column outside Warsaw on October 20th, and the southern column at Kozienice on October 27th. The Germans thereupon fell back on Kalisz and Czystochowa, destroying the railways behind them, and delaying the Russian pursuit. When the German Army was disposed of, the Grand Duke Nicholas turned his attention to the Austrians, who held the line of the Vistula from Rozehof down to Sandomier, as well as the line of the San river down to the Carpathian mountains. The Austrian Army was badly defeated at Sandomier on November 5th, and retreated towards Cracow. This necessitated the retirement of the Austrians from the San river, the bulk of the troops retreating over the Carpathian passes, as their direct line of retreat through Galicia was intercepted by the Russians, who have again invested Przemyśl. Hindenburg meanwhile hastened back to Thorn, where he immediately set himself the task of organising a new army out of the beaten one, reinforced with all available troops taken out of the Oder and Vistula fortresses.

At the end of the first week in November the Grand Duke Nicholas had every reason to be satisfied with the results achieved in the first three months of the war. His strategy had been uniformly successful. The plan of invasion of East Prussia had been well conceived, and only failed in execution because of the rashness of a subordinate general. On the Galician flank the way in which he drew the 1st Austrian Army into Poland, separating it from the 2nd Austrian Army, and then placed General Ruszky between the two armies, was a brilliant piece of strategy, which met with its reward when the Austrian Armies were separately beaten before they had time to unite. The method selected for meeting Hindenburg's

first invasion of Poland by retiring before his advance, and then falling on his flank, was typical of Russian traditional strategy, and in its result proved the Grand Duke to be a strategist of the first order. The narrative of events which led up to the great Russian retreat in the summer of 1915, and the causes which contributed to the disasters of that year, will be related in subsequent chapters of this volume.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST

September 15 to October 15th

1914

German position on the Aisne—Its natural and artificial strength—Frontal attack abandoned by the Allies—Attempts to turn the German right flank—Failure of these attempts—Cause of their failure—The race to the North Sea—Fall of Antwerp—Its strategical value to Germany—Causes of its fall—Tardy British action.

IN Chapter II of this volume the *précis* narrative of the campaign in the west was brought down to the 15th September, when the Anglo-French and German Armies were watching each other across the banks of the Aisne.

The position to which the German Army had retired during the second week in September, and to which it has clung with such tenacity, was chosen for strategical reasons, which will be presently explained; but it must not be inferred that because it was so chosen it was part of the original plan of the enemy's campaign to advance to the Marne, and then retreat to the Aisne, for it would be an insult to the intelligence of the German General Staff to suggest that they had so negative an idea in mind when they made their elaborate preparations for invading France through the neutral territory of Belgium. Paris was all along the positive objective in view, and it was only because the German Army failed to reach this objective that it fell back to a defensive position fifty miles north of it. The Germans retired from the Marne, not in accordance with a previous plan to do so, but because they were driven back by pressure from the Allies. The position occupied was a defensive, not offensive one, its use being to cover the German lines of retreat to the Rhine valley should events compel the abandonment of the invasion of France. That the Aisne position might have to be put to this use had no doubt been considered by the German General Staff as an eventual possibility, but only as such, and not as a primary object of strategical endeavour.

A glance at the outline sketch accompanying this chapter will show why the Aisne position was chosen as the rallying

point d'appui for the German Army when it was pushed back from Paris, why General Kluck, who appears to have had executive direction of the whole movement, made such hurried efforts to reach the position, and why he has fought so hard to hold it.

The valleys of the Oise and Meuse rivers on the west, and of the Moselle on the east, are the two main lines of advance along which the German invaders entered France, and they are also their two main lines of retreat back to Germany. There is a third way to and from the Rhine through the *trouée* between the duchy of Luxemburg and the fortress of Verdun, but the way is narrow, and has, for the purpose of the present invasion, only been used as a subsidiary line of advance, the great bulk of the invading troops having come through neutral territory by the lines mentioned.

Only the two main railway systems connecting France with the Rhine are shown on the sketch, subsidiary lines having been omitted lest the vision should be obscured by details, and the eye diverted from the water-courses along which the main trunk railway lines find their natural path. It will be seen that these two main lines, and the various subsidiary lines right and left of them, converge on the two great Rhine fortresses of Cologne and Coblenz, and it was through these two places that the flood of invasion passed westwards out of Germany on its way into France, and through them that it will flow back eastwards when the time comes for the tide to recede.

Having got these two lines fixed in mind, the strategical problem with map in hand is easy to comprehend. The German position, as first taken up, extended along the right bank of the Aisne river from Compiègne, where the waters of the Aisne join those of the Oise; as far as Berry-au-Bac, where the line of defence left the Aisne river to follow the course of the Suipe till it reached Vienne-la-Ville, whence it was taken through the Forêt d'Argonne to Consenvoye on the Meuse. With its right resting on the Oise, its left on the Meuse, and its centre firmly planted on the plateau of Craonne, the German Army was clearly so placed as to be able to cover the lines of retreat up the Oise valley on the west, and down the Meuse and Moselle valleys on the east, provided the tactical conditions were favourable for the defence of the position occupied. That they were so may be gathered from the success of the Germans to hold their ground during the past month. Between Compiègne and Berry-au-Bac, within artillery range of the

river, is a broad ridgeway running parallel to the Aisne valley, and gradually ascending from the Oise river till it reaches a height of between 400 and 500 feet at Craonne, where it opens out into an extensive plateau, the southern edge of which dominates the river valley. This ridgeway is cut up with wooded ravines by numberless streams flowing down into the river, the ravines being here and there terraced, sometimes by nature, but more often by German pioneers in the process of constructing infantry trenches and artillery emplacements. Beyond Berry-au-Bac the position is less commanding and more open, the ground gradually rising from the Suipe valley in a continuous and gentle slope to a height varying between 100 and 150 feet, the contour of the ground giving always the tactical advantage to the defender. During the 12th and 18th of September immense energy must have been brought to bear on the construction of rifle and gun sites, for when the Allies reached the Aisne on the 14th they found all the approaches to the river commanded by artillery fire along the whole length of the 90-mile front from Compiègne to the Argonne. Fortunately for the Germans the fortress of Maubeuge had fallen on the 7th of September, and as soon as the retreat from the Marne began a number of 28-centimetre (11-inch) guns used in the siege were brought down to the Aisne, and were already in position when the Allies arrived.

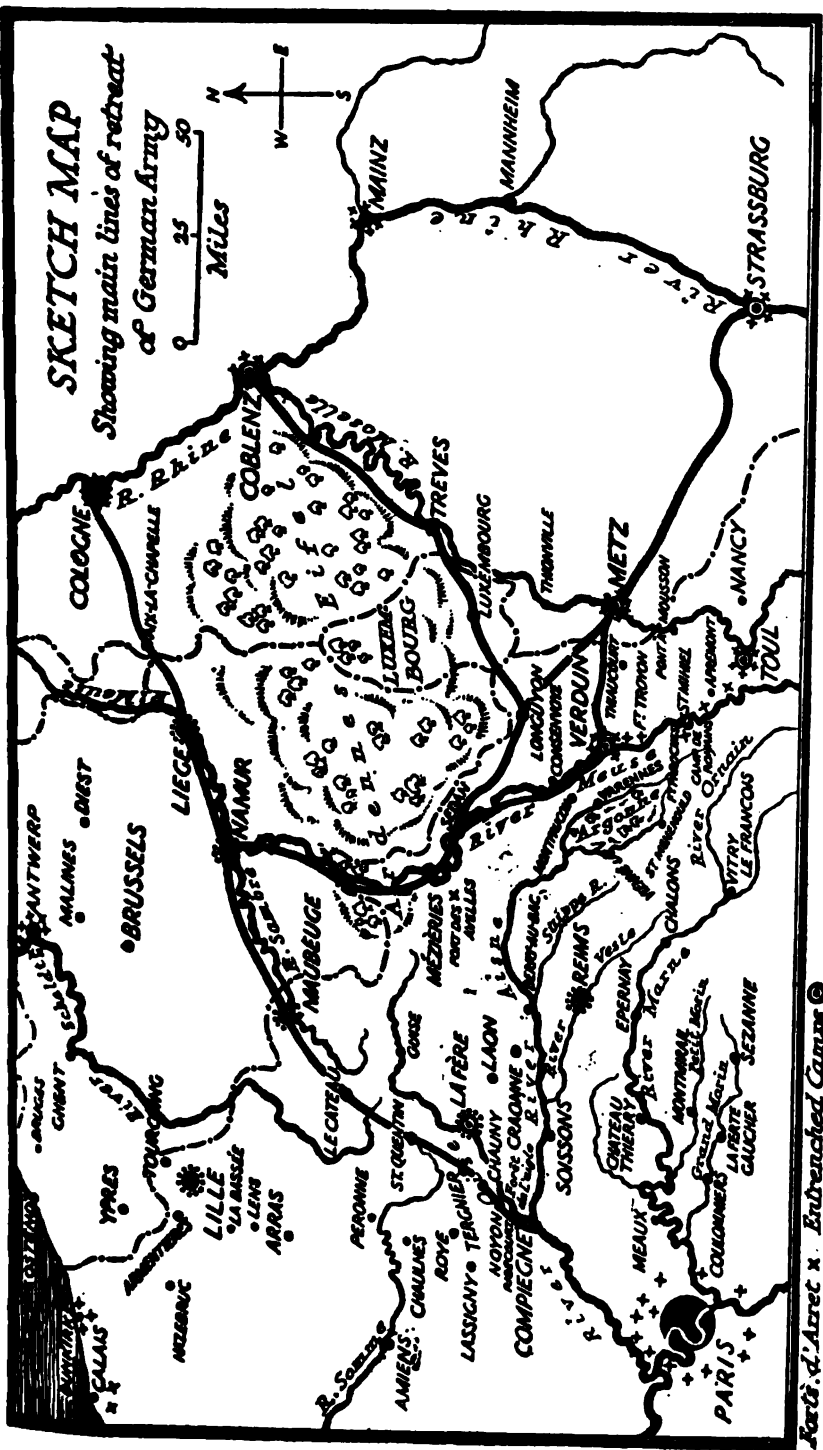
The river was crossed with difficulty on the 18th and 14th, and then the Allies found themselves up against a very strong tactical position from which the enemy could not be dislodged except at enormous sacrifice of life. Sir John French and General Joffre, acting, no doubt, together, thereupon decided not to attempt a general frontal attack, but to occupy defensive positions facing those of the Germans, and wait for the development of a movement which, by turning the right flank of the German line, would threaten the rear of the army, and compel the enemy to seek safety in retreat. Tactically, this was the best course to take, while, strategically, the effect of the turning movement, if successful, would force the Germans out of their positions without the necessity of assaulting them.

Although there has never been any authoritative announcement by the French General Staff of the distribution of the French Armies during any part of the campaign, it is possible, by putting together fragments of information furnished from private or public sources, to locate the general positions of the various armies when the turning movement mentioned above was under consideration. The British Army held the ground

SKETCH MAP

Showing main lines of retreat
of German Army

0 25 50
Miles



Retreat of German Army. Entrenched Camps

between Soissons and Craonne, where the line of defence was taken up by the 5th French Army, and continued by the 9th Army under General Foch down to the Argonne, when it was taken up by the 4th under General Sarrail, who had replaced General Langle de Cary. From Verdun down to Belfort the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Armies were distributed along the eastern frontier, but the precise order of their distribution is unknown. On Sir John French's left was the 6th Army under General Maunoury, holding the ground between Soissons and the Oise, with the 7th Army under General d'Amade echeloned in rear of Compiègne. What the strength of these armies was at the time is another unknown quantity, for the French General Staff is even more reticent than the German in regard to the strength and distribution of troops at the front. What we do know with approximate certainty is the strength of the British Army, which was composed of six Divisions and two Cavalry Divisions of the Expeditionary Force, and which was reinforced early in October by the 7th Division under Major-General Capper, and the Indian Contingent, comprising two Infantry Divisions and one Cavalry Division. Reckoning line of communication troops, the British Army at that time totalled up to something like 250,000 officers and men. As regards the strength of the German Army then present in Belgium and France, it is impossible to give figures which can be considered as even approximately reliable. A high authority estimated the strength at 1,500,000: but this was admittedly a guess-work figure, and was probably an excessive calculation, which cannot be verified for want of necessary data.

The right flank of the German line was obviously the one to attack, for, in order to strengthen his position north of the Aisne river, the German Commander had called in all outlying troops from the west of the Oise, and in so doing had left the way open for a French concentration on the line Beauvais-Amiens, where reinforcements of troops could be brought up from the south and east of France by using the admirable network of railways converging on the places named. This exposed flank was also open at all times to the menace of an attack coming oversea from a force landed at any of the ports on the French or Belgian coasts. General Joffre was quick to perceive the opening given to him, and was equally quick to make use of it. On or about the 16th of September he relieved General Castelnau of his command in Lorraine and ordered him to take the 7th French Army, reinforced by troops from the Paris garrison, up the right bank of the Oise in the direc-

tion of Noyon and Ham, with the intention of occupying the German troops known to be in the neighbourhood of Chauny. Simultaneously with this movement General Maud'huy, in command of the newly formed 10th Army, was directed to concentrate at Amiens, and by a rapid march up the Somme river make a surprise attack on the rear of the German position. This was the general plan, as gleaned from available information, and from the movements which took place. How was it carried out, and with what results?

Here it will be convenient to follow in chronological sequence the movements of French and German troops so far as it is possible to narrate them by the light of the *communiqués* issued twice a day in Paris from the French War Ministry, with the assistance of the wireless official messages which reached London every day from Berlin. From our own Government we got no news. A chronicler was attached to British headquarters in France, but he confined his reports to retailing such gossip as he could pick up in the trenches, or headquarter mess, and which was intended to amuse rather than inform the public. No exception could be taken to the Paris *communiqués* which give the French public as much information as could be expected while operations were in progress, and until results were obtained, nor to the wireless bulletins of Berlin, which were fairly accurate when recording military events, though wholly unreliable when they dealt with matters of political concern.

September 13.—A general movement of concentration was ordered by the German General Staff. Amiens was evacuated by the enemy, and German troops withdrawn from the west of the Vosges.

September 14.—Crown Prince's Army retreated to the line Varennes-Consenvoye. On that day the German line of defence north of the Aisne extended from the Forêt de l'Aigle to Craonne, Berry-au-Bac and Vienne-la-Ville. Rheims was occupied by the 5th French Army.

September 15.—Allies entrench their positions.

September 16.—7th French Army moved up the right bank of the Oise.

September 17.—Heavy attacks and counter-attacks all along the line from the Oise to the Argonne.

September 18.—7th French Army moved to Noyon.

September 19.—Germans reported to be reinforcing their right flank.

September 20.—7th French Army moved on Lassigny. Germans made unsuccessful attacks on the Allies all along the line.

September 21.—Crown Prince of Bavaria occupied Thiancourt, and began an offensive movement against St. Mihiel. Bombardment of Rheims.

September 22.—German advance towards St. Mihiel continued.

September 23.—7th French Army advanced towards Roye. Advanced guard of 10th French Army coming through Amiens occupied Peronne. Varennes reoccupied by Crown Prince's Army. Germans gained a footing on the right bank of the Meuse near St. Mihiel.

September 24.—German concentration reported on the line Tergnier-St. Quentin, reinforcements having arrived from Lorraine and the Vosges *via* Belgium. French advance checked north-west of Noyon. Peronne reoccupied by Germans. Camp des Romains captured by the Germans, who occupied St. Mihiel. French troops moved from Toul towards Apremont.

September 25.—Heavy fighting in Lassigny district.

September 26.—Violent German counter-attack west of Soissons repulsed.

September 27.—British lines between Soissons and Craonne attacked with great vigour, but without success. Siege of Antwerp began.

September 28.—French left attack extended through Roye up to the Somme river, and thence to the plateau between Albert and Combles, the Germans holding an enclave at Lassigny.

September 29.—Unsuccessful attack made on French position between the Oise and the Somme. French continued to advance in the Woerthe district east of St. Mihiel.

September 30.—No change.

October 1.—French debouching from Arras were attacked by Germans, and forced to fall back to the west and north. German attacks on French between Roye and Lassigny repulsed. Germans unsuccessfully attempt to throw a bridge over the Meuse at St. Mihiel. Wavre and Dorveld forts on south-east of Antwerp stormed.

October 2.—Battle continued in Roye district, the Germans having been reinforced by troops from the centre. Varennes retaken by the French, Crown Prince's Army being thrown back north of the line Varennes-Vienne-la-Ville.

October 8.—Battle continued round Arras. British Army began to evacuate its positions on the Aisne and move to Flanders.¹

¹ The operations of the British Army are described more fully in Chapter V.

October 4.—No change. Fighting continued between the Oise and the Somme.

October 5.—German cavalry reported near Lille preceding a force moving through the district north of the line Turcoing-Armentières. Violent fighting continued between the Oise and the Somme.

October 6.—French flank movement extended northwards. River Nethe crossed by the German infantry.

October 7.—Opposing fronts extended to Lens-La Bassée. Bombardment of Antwerp began at midnight.

October 8.—Cavalry in contact north-west of Lille. Bombardment of Antwerp continued.

October 9.—Battle east of Arras. Fighting continued with Germans established on heights of the Meuse north of St. Mihiel, Surrender of Antwerp.

October 10.—Cavalry fighting continued north-west of Lille. Fighting round Apremont in the Woerthe district.

October 11.—No change. French territorial troops replaced British troops on the Aisne.

October 12.—French gained ground below Soissons. Sir John French established his headquarters at St. Omer. British Army concentrated on the line Aire-Dunkirk.

October 13.—Lille occupied by a German Army Corps. French gained ground at Berry-au-Bac. Ghent occupied by the Germans. Franco-British troops occupied Ypres.

October 14.—Germans occupied Bruges. Estaires occupied by the Allies, and enemy driven across the Lys river.

October 15.—Battle in progress from the region of Ypres to the sea.

October 16.—Germans occupied Ostend.

October 17.—No change.

The above diary is highly instructive as showing the gradual evolution of General Joffre's turning movement, and of General Kluck's efforts to prevent it. Both commanders tried to screen their movements from each other, and both failed to do so. Both appear to have been well served by their aviators, whose supersession of the cavalry as information agents is one of the most remarkable developments of the present war. Spies of course played their part, but all accounts go to show that aviation is what the Intelligence officers on both sides principally relied upon for obtaining information about the enemy's movements. The strategical rôle of the cavalry is a thing of the past, the use of that arm now

being limited to local screening operations and shock tactics, after the strategical plans have brought the opposing forces into contact.

The French concentration at Amiens was effected on or about the 21st September, Peronne being occupied on the 28rd. Great expectations were raised in Paris and London by the announcement of the news. It was thought that the German right had actually been turned, and that the inevitable retreat would at last begin; but the expectations were short-lived, for on the same day that Peronne was occupied General Kluck had concentrated on the line St. Quentin-Tergnier an army of 200,000 men, brought up by hook and crook from whatever place troops could best be spared along the battle line. Some of the reinforcements came from the centre, others from the Crown Prince's Army on the Meuse, others from Luxemburg and Brussels, but the bulk of the troops were brought from Lorraine and Alsace, the railways through Belgium being used for their transport to prevent congestion of traffic on the line running along the rear of the German front through Montmédy, Sedan, and Hirson. The rapid transfer of reinforcements from left to right in the way described saved the situation for General Kluck, who fell upon the heads of the French columns as they were debouching from Amiens, attacking them with great fury, and pushing them, not only off his main line of retreat down the Sambre valley, but also off the subsidiary line down the valley of the upper Schelde river through Cambrai and Valenciennes. The manner in which these troops were brought into the fighting line in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place, reflects the highest credit on the German Commander, who, whether in attack or in defence, has shown himself to be a "foeman worthy of his steel," and one whom the Allies will be proud to conquer.

It is reported that General Joffre was much disquieted on the night of the 28rd owing to the failure of his plan to surprise his enemy, and this disquietude seems to have been passed on to our own Government, for on the 25th all war correspondents were warned not to come within twenty miles of the fighting line, while "military experts" were forbidden to "speculate about the movements of the Allies," and required to submit their remarks to the Press Bureau before publication. These drastic measures for concealing information and suppressing discussion did not meet with general approval. It is clear that the Germans knew of the French movements long before

we knew of them in England, and in no case would they come to a newspaper writer in London for second-hand information, which they could get first-hand on the spot. Secrecy of movement is practically impossible under modern war conditions by land and air; given an alert enemy, and surprise is a thing of the past. What counts for victory in a present-day campaign are numbers, organisation, training, leading, and, above all, courage, such as French and British troops show themselves to possess in so conspicuous a degree.

On the 15th September there was only one battle line in France, that from Compiègne to Verdun: a month later there were two; a southern and a western line, which we gradually watched growing longer and longer on its way up to the sea, where it came to an automatic end. When General Joffre took one step along this line General Kluck took another. When French reinforcements arrived it was only to find German reinforcements facing them. There was a race between the two sides to outflank each other, and it ended in a dead heat.

As long as the German invasion followed its course unchecked towards Paris, Antwerp was left to itself, but after the retreat from the Marne the Belgian Army, which had taken refuge under the guns of the fortress, began to make itself troublesome on the line of communication, and the place then became a thorn in the German side. It was accordingly decided to reduce it, and the Germans set about the task of doing so with their usual alacrity. Two army corps were detailed for the siege, and all available siege guns brought into position, including a proportion of the 28-centimetre howitzers, which were used at the siege of Maubeuge, and two of the new 42-centimetre howitzers, which appear to have been taken as far as Namur, although that fortress was captured without the necessity of using them. Added to these siege pieces, which were used to subjugate the forts, were the field guns and howitzers belonging to the two army corps, and which were alone employed in the bombardment of the town, as the German object in bombarding was to terrify the inhabitants rather than destroy the buildings. The siege was short and sharp, the first gun being fired on the 27th September, and the last on the morning of the 9th October. On the 1st October the forts of Wavre and Lierre were subdued by artillery fire, and Fort Walhem, a more formidable work, encircled. The reduction of these works opened the passages across the Nethe river, which was

crossed by infantry on the 6th October, and by artillery on the 7th. Due notice having been given, the bombardment of the city began at midnight on the 7th, and was continued all through the 8th, and into the morning of the 9th, when the city surrendered, and was occupied by the Germans under General Beseler at 2.30 p.m.

In response to an urgent appeal by the Belgian Government, the Cabinet agreed on Mr. Churchill's recommendation to send a Marine Brigade, and two of the lately formed Naval Brigades, together with two 9.2 B.L. naval guns, to take part in the defence of the fortress during the last week of the siege. This contingent, amounting in all to 8000 officers and men, under the command of Brigadier-General A. Paris, C.B., reached Antwerp *via* Dunkirk on the 4th October, the bulk of the men being sent on at once to the trenches constructed on the right bank of the Nethe river. Fighting alongside of the Belgians these men held their own in the trenches throughout the 4th and 5th, but during the night of the 5th and morning of the 6th they had to face such an overwhelming artillery fire that they were compelled to give way and retire behind the second line of forts surrounding the town. The defence could have been prolonged had there been any hope of relief, and had the line of retreat over the Schelde river been secure: but on the 6th the Germans who had gained a footing on the left bank of the Schelde at Termond succeeded in pushing back the Belgians to Lokeren, and threatened to cut off the retreat of the garrison to Ghent. Thereupon the British and Belgian Military Commanders decided to evacuate the fortress, the retirement being carried out in very good order on the 7th and 8th, but owing to the pressure of the German attack some 20,000 Belgians and 2000 men belonging to the 1st Naval Brigade were cut off, and compelled to cross the Dutch frontier, where they laid down their arms. The naval guns were taken away by train to Bruges, and got through to Dunkirk without mishap.

The fall of Antwerp after so short a siege produced a moral effect throughout the world incommensurate with the material value which the possession of the fortress confers on the Germans. Considered from this point of view, the surrender of the place cannot be regarded other than a regrettable disaster, which it may not have been possible to have averted, but the consequences of which cannot be minimised. It revived the spirits of the German people, and brought to them moral compensation for the failure of their armies to win victory in

the field. Among neutral States waiting on events—Italy, Roumania, Turkey—there was a reaction of feeling which encouraged the war party at Constantinople, and correspondingly discouraged the other two States from throwing in their lot with the Allies. In England a feeling of uneasiness, not the less marked because it was groundless, found expression in a leading London journal, which opened its columns to an attack on Mr. Churchill for leaving the Admiralty and visiting Antwerp with the hope of reviving the drooping spirits of the Belgian garrison. Whether the criticism was justified or not—most people think it was misconceived—the fact of its publication in a responsible newspaper was indicative of a certain latent sense of dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Government in turning a deaf ear to King Albert's plea for help, and then at the last moment sending to Antwerp an inadequate force, which came too late to do anything except share the stigma of defeat.

The strategical gain to the Germans by the possession of Antwerp, though less appreciable than the moral loss to the Allies, is none the less considerable, especially at this phase of the campaign, for Antwerp was a strong *place d'armes*, situated within forty miles of the German line of communications with their Rhine base, and serving as a powerful *point d'appui* for the Belgian field army, from which it could harass the German communications should a retreat become inevitable. This danger was removed, and the German communications secured. Of still greater importance was the release of the army of observation, which had been watching the fortress since the Belgian Army retreated under cover of its guns, and which after its surrender became available to reinforce the German Army in the field. Without loss of time this reinforcement was thrown into the field, enabling the Germans to extend their battle line from Lille to the sea-coast without further weakening their defensive position north of the Aisne by transferring men from the centre to the right.

Antwerp cannot be used as a naval base for operations against England, even if the German Navy had access to its harbour. Whether the Dutch claim to absolute sovereignty over the Schelde entrance is justified by the terms of the Treaty of 1839 or not¹—the writer holds conclusively that it is not—it is a claim which the German Government has always supported, and could not now repudiate without striking a blow

¹ This matter was fully discussed in a convincing article by Mr. Boulger in the *Fortnightly Review* for October 1914.

at the neutrality of Holland. In 1910 we ourselves acquiesced in the claim, and so did the Belgians when they refused to protest against the construction of the Flushing forts. For the purpose of attacking England the Germans would not hesitate to go back from the position, which they have always taken up in time of peace, but if they were to do so, the Dutch Government would be compelled to regard their action as a breach of neutrality, and whatever the Dutch might do by belligerent or diplomatic action, we should be free to safeguard our own interests by blockading the coast of Holland. In her own interest, and as long as the balance of naval power remains in British hands, Germany will do nothing to justify our closing the port of Rotterdam to neutral ships during the continuation of the war.

The defence of Antwerp does not appear to have been well organised. The Belgians trusted too much to their forts, too little to mobile defence. British help was sent too late, and when it arrived it was not the kind of help wanted. The Naval Brigades are a new creation, and the men composing them had not been trained to fight on land. Had a few companies of Field Engineers—Territorials if Regulars were not available—been sent to Antwerp as soon as it was known that the Germans were seriously besieging the place, they could, under competent direction, have constructed trenches with overhead cover for the protection of the defenders against artillery fire. Improved entrenchments can be made practically immune from shrapnel, as we have seen in our own case at Ladysmith, and in the fighting which has been going on during the past month north of the Aisne river. As it was, the Nethe trenches had been so hastily and unscientifically constructed as to be practically useless, and when the Naval Brigade men arrived on the 4th October, they were literally shelled out of the position without being given a chance of using their rifles. Brave as the Belgian troops have shown themselves to be in the presence of the enemy, the *moral* of the Antwerp garrison had become so weakened by defeat that when the Nethe forts had been subdued all heart was taken out of the defenders.

The fall of Antwerp following so soon after that of Liège, Namur, and Maubeuge, has raised doubts in many minds as to the utility of fixed defences in modern war. It is said that the offensive power of artillery has increased in a greater degree than its defensive power. This is true of fortress warfare as waged under existing conditions. The modern howitzer can be brought into action in a concealed position without the fort

being able to locate that position, or even if it can do so, to reply effectively to its fire. In the field it is the other way on. Given equality of power—the writer is now referring exclusively to artillery fire—and the advantage is on the side of the defence, which can adapt itself to circumstances by means of counter attack. This is what we saw going on during the month covered by this chapter north of the Aisne, where both the Allies and the Germans in their improvised entrenched positions have successfully held their own against attacks made by one or the other. The conditions are different in the case of fixed defences. The attacking howitzer can move, but the defending fort is stationary and all the defender can do is to sit in his cupola till the first well-directed shot buries him in its *débris*.

When, then, it is asked if fortresses have any longer a rôle in modern war, the answer probably will be that they will have the same strategical and delaying purpose as they have always had, and other than which they have never had, but under altered conditions both of construction and defence. The day for concrete and iron has passed away. Brialmont would be the first to admit it were he alive. Closed works must be replaced by open earthwork redoubts, massively built, connected together with overhead cover, and so devised as to admit of rapid improvised extension to meet the ever-changing conditions of the attack. The armament of the defence must never fall behind that of the attack, as it clearly has done in the cases under reference, and defence must be based on mobility, which is the keynote to all success in war, whether by land, sea, or air.

The unexpected initial successes of Russia on the Eastern front destroyed the only chance which the Germans ever had of crushing France first, and Russia afterwards. Austria proved to be a broken reed. Poland was a lightning conductor for Paris. Thenceforth Germany had to undertake a task which was beyond her strength to accomplish. Long as was the start which she had gained by the secrecy of her preparations to attack her neighbours, it was not long enough to save her from the ruin which she will inevitably bring on herself by the acquiescence of her people in the aggressive designs of her rulers.

“*Vis consili expert mole ruit suâ ;
Vim temperatam Di quoque provehant
In majus : idem odere vires
Omne nefas animo moventes.*”

CHAPTER V

THE CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST

October 15th to November 15th

1914

Sir John French's dispatch of the 20th November, 1914—His plan to invade Belgium—Causes of its failure—General Smith-Dorrien's attempt to occupy Lille—General Haig occupies Ypres—Sir John French's sound strategy—First battle of Ypres—Defeat of the Prussian Guard—Decisive British victory—Failure of German mass tactics—German artillery preponderance—Ascendancy of British over German infantry.

THE dispatch of Field-Marshal Sir John French which covered the period between the 8th October and 20th November, and was published in the *London Gazette* of the 29th November, 1914, was a notable contribution to the official literature of the war, and was all the more welcome because up to the date of its appearance the public had no other knowledge of what was taking place at the Front than what could be learnt through the necessarily meagre references to the operations of the British Army which appeared from day to day in the *communiqués* issued under the authority of the French and German General Staffs. Whenever Continental nations have been at war the custom has been for news to be given in the form of official bulletins, such as are published in Paris, Berlin, and Petrograd; but with us it has always been a time-honoured practice to look to the *London Gazette* for the full and unedited reports of the General who is entrusted with the direction of operations in the field. It is recognised that he may have to correspond confidentially concerning many matters affecting his troops with the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for War, and other members of the Government, but it is the invariable practice for his dispatches describing operations to be published *in extenso* without either curtailment or addition.

The dispatch under notice began with a brief allusion to the operation of transporting the British Army composed of three British Corps (six divisions), one Anglo-Indian Corps (two divisions), and four cavalry divisions, over a distance of approximately 100 miles from the valley of the Aisne to the new

rendezvous on the line St. Omer-Aisne-Bethune. The movement included the transfer of the British lines of communication from St. Nazier and the Havre to Boulogne and Abbeville, and this meant the movement of an army of between 200,000 and 250,000 men with all its impedimenta round the flank of the French troops, who were in position on the line Arras-Albert-Compiègne, and who numbered perhaps as many as 400,000 men. These troops were drawing their supplies from the west of France by railways converging on Amiens, and the British Army when moving to its new position had to cross the French line of communications, which could not be done without a considerable dislocation of our ally's supply arrangements. When these circumstances are considered we can understand what Sir John French meant when he described the operation as being a "delicate" one, the success of which was due to the "excellent feeling which existed between the French and British Army."

The movement began on October 8rd, and was completed in seventeen days on October 19th, when the 1st Corps under Sir Douglas Haig finished its detrainment at St. Omer. How many railway lines and trains were used, what time-table was drawn up by the French railway administration, and whether the cavalry and artillery went by march or railway route, we are not told, but in any case, though the movement was carried out without a hitch, it cannot be said to have been rapidly executed. No doubt the facts mentioned in the preceding paragraph interfered with the continuity of the operation, but what we have to note is that when speed was vital to the success of Sir John French's plans seventeen days were allowed to pass before the movement was finally completed. If General Kluck had been told to wait seventeen days before reinforcements were sent to him from Lorraine when General Castelnau was threatening his flank in September the German Army would not now be in the position which it occupies on the north bank of the river Aisne.

During the month preceding the period covered by the above diary we had been watching a strategical race between the Allies and their adversaries, who started on their course from the Oise river in the middle of September, and arrived at the sea-coast in the middle of October. At one time it looked as though the Allies would win, but partly owing to good luck, as will be presently shown, partly also to the strategical skill of the German General Staff, the race ended in a dead-heat, which happened in this way.

When General Joffre in consultation with Field-Marshal Sir John French decided to transfer the British Army from its position on the Aisne to the north-western frontier of Belgium, it was with the intention of making a second attempt to take his enemy by surprise with an outflanking movement, which the French Commander-in-Chief failed to accomplish when he moved General Castelnau's army to Amiens, and when the move was met by a counter-move on the German side. On October 7th General Joffre was aware of the existence of large bodies of the enemy's cavalry on the Lys river, but on that date there was no general concentration of German troops either in West Flanders or anywhere north of Arras. Antwerp was known to be in danger, but it was thought that the British reinforcements which had been thrown into the fortress at the eleventh hour might have the effect of delaying surrender long enough to give time for its relief.¹ In any case, the French Commander-in-Chief hoped by a rapid offensive movement down the Lys to secure the line of that river, and by threatening the German line of communications compel the enemy either to fight at strategical disadvantage or retreat. One of the results of this strategy would be the automatic relief of Antwerp.

With the candour which marked all his dispatches Sir John French said his original intention was to "effectively outflank the enemy and compel him to evacuate his positions," and when the Field-Marshal first conceived his plan (October 3rd) the chances of success appeared to be wholly in his favour. Two, if not three, German Corps were being held up before Antwerp, and there was reason to think that with the naval help about to be sent to Belgium the fortress could hold out till the British Army came to its relief. West of the Schelde river the enemy's troops had been withdrawn both from France and Belgium. Ghent and Bruges were in Belgian possession, and Lille was occupied by a French Territorial detachment. The French Armies which had been placed under General Foch were holding their own between Arras and Douai, and the way into Belgium seemed open for Sir John French's intended invasion.

Why did the plan fail? Because success depended on secrecy and rapidity, and neither of these two conditions was found to exist. The German Intelligence Department is remarkably

¹ Criticism would at present be premature, but it is already open to question whether Lord Kitchener, with whom the superior direction of the war then lay, sufficiently appreciated the importance of Antwerp, and why it was left to the Admiralty to do with imperfect means what the Army might have done with greater prospect of success.

well served in various ways, and the British movement was known and followed up from the first days of its initiation. Directly General Gough began his march to Bethune the German cavalry was put in motion from Douai, and sent up to cover the approaches to Lille with the intention of preventing a British incursion down the Lys river. When General Smith-Dorrien arrived with the 2nd Corps (3rd and 5th Divisions) on the line Aire-Bethune on October 11th he found the road to Lille was blocked by a large force of German cavalry consisting of the 2nd, 4th, 7th, and 9th Cavalry Divisions with a few Jaeger battalions of infantry, who delayed his advance for three days till the arrival of the 14th German Corps, which occupied Lille on October 18th. The 2nd Division arrived too late in the field. The Germans seized the strong tactical position of La Bassée, which has been a thorn in the side of the British Army ever since its seizure, and though Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien fought his way to within five miles of Lille he was compelled by the continuous arrival of fresh German reinforcements to fall back on the position which he is now holding just east of Bethune.

The 3rd Corps (4th and 6th Divisions) under General Pulteney, following hard on the heels of the 2nd Corps, reached St. Omer on the night of October 11th, and Hazebrouck next day. General Pulteney found his advance was at first only opposed by the 4th German Cavalry Division, accompanied by some Jaeger battalions, and these he pushed back with comparative ease as he turned south to make his way down to the Lys river. Bailleul was occupied on the 14th, Armentières on the 15th, and on the following day the advanced guards crossed the Lys river, and pushed on in the direction of Lille with the intention of giving a hand to the 2nd Corps, but on the 18th progress came suddenly to an end owing to the reinforcements which the enemy had brought into line at this point. On the night of October 18th the 3rd Corps occupied the line Radingham-Frelinghein, but General Pulteney never got beyond this line, and that he reached it at all is a high testimony to the skill, courage, and resource of his leadership.

The 1st Corps (1st and 2nd Divisions) under Sir Douglas Haig did not reach Hazebrouck before October 19th, eight days after the arrival of the 2nd and 3rd Corps, and then Sir John French had to take a momentous decision. What was to be done with the 1st Corps? The 2nd and 3rd Corps were being hard pressed on a twenty-mile front, which according to tactical laws was much too extended to be held against a

superior enemy's force. The 7th Division¹ under Major-General Capper, part of the then unformed 4th Corps, which had been lending a hand to the Belgian garrison while escaping from Antwerp, along with the 8rd Cavalry Division under Major-General Julian Byng, were holding a position covering Ypres and extending for some ten miles on the left of the 3rd Corps from Zonnebeke to Langemarck. Was not the line of British troops on this thirty-mile front too thin to put up a successful resistance against the daily increasing pressure from the enemy? The question was one of vital importance, but Sir John French had no difficulty in answering it by deciding that greater risks would be incurred by leaving his left flank exposed to attack, than by reinforcing British troops already engaged. Generals Smith-Dorrien and Pulteney were informed that they must hold on to their positions as best they could till Indian troops were sent to reinforce them, and until German pressure was removed by the development of Sir Douglas Haig's movement on the north. Clearly at this time the Field-Marshal still had hopes of carrying out his plan, not of relieving Antwerp, which had fallen on October 9th, but of making his way into Belgium, and securing its coast-line.

Subsequent events have shown that Sir John French's decision was wisely taken, and that if he had taken any other, the Germans would have succeeded in reaching not only the coast of Belgium, but also the coast of France, cutting the British Army off from Boulogne, and forcing it to retire in order to seek a new line of communication with its sea base. The Field-Marshal knew his troops, and trusted them. "No more arduous task," he writes, "has ever been assigned to British

¹ The 7th Division, which landed at Zeebrugge on the 7th October with the 3rd Cavalry Division, was composed as under—

MAJOR-GENERAL T. CAPPER, C.B., D.S.O.

30th Brigade. Brig.-General H. G. Ruggles-Bruss.	31st Brigade. Brig.-General H. H. Watts.	32nd Brigade. Brig.-General S. T. B. Lawford.
1st Grenadier Guards. 2nd Scots Guards. 2nd Border Regiment. 2nd Gordon Highlanders (92nd).	2nd Yorkshire Regiment. 2nd Bedfordshire Regiment. 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers. 2nd Wiltshire Regiment.	2nd Warwickshire Regiment. 2nd Queen's. 1st Royal Welch Fusiliers. 1st South Staffordshire Regiment.

soldiers, and in all their splendid history there is no instance of their having answered so magnificently to the desperate call which of necessity was made on them." How desperate that call was can be understood when we know that during the last days of October and the first fortnight of November some fifteen German Corps were concentrated against the position taken up by the British Army north and south of the Lys river.

Before the arrival of the 1st Corps Sir John French's plans had been considerably dislocated by the inability of Sir Henry Rawlinson, under whose directions General Capper was acting, to carry out the Field-Marshal's instructions to seize the small town of Menin, an important *tête de pont* on the Lys river just where it reaches the French frontier. With the limited force at his disposal, weakened by long marching and severe fighting, Sir Henry Rawlinson judged it impossible to carry out his orders,¹ and Sir John French accepted this decision as "probably a wise one," but none the less have the consequences of letting Menin fall into the enemy's hands proved disastrous, for the place has been used all along, and is still used as these words are being written, as an offensive *point d'appui* for the numerous attempts made by the Germans to capture the Ypres position.

As soon as the 1st Corps arrived at Hazebrouck (October 19th) General Haig was directed to advance through Ypres to Thorout with the object of capturing Bruges, and securing the line of the Lys river up to Ghent. But it was too late. On the 21st General Haig reached the line Zonnebeke-Langemarck-Bixchoote, and up to the present date British troops have never been able to advance east of it. So extended was his front until the 9th French Corps arrived on the 24th, and so strongly was he attacked that he was only able to hold on to his position by the almost superhuman efforts of his officers and men, who fought with a courage and tenacity which have never been surpassed and rarely equalled in the annals of the British Army. How the position of Ypres was over and over again assailed from north, south, and east, how the picked troops of Germany were hurled against it, how the Bavarians

¹ There can be little doubt that if Sir Henry Rawlinson had attempted to seize Menin the 7th Division would have been annihilated. As it was, this famous Division lived to take a leading part in the subsequent fighting round Ypres when its three Brigades bore the brunt of the battle at Kruseik, and at various points between Zandvoorde and Zonnebeke. The casualty list is a testimony to the heroism with which the whole Division fought throughout the great three week's battle. Out of 400 officers and 12,000 men who landed at Zeebrugge the Division lost 356 officers and 9,664 men; but their lives were not wasted, for it was largely owing to the stubborn determination with which they held their ground that the German attack was shattered.

had their try, and then the Prussian Guard, how all attacks failed in spite of the German Emperor's orders that Ypres must be taken at any cost—the whole of this wonderful story is told by the Field-Marshal in words which will live as long as the British Empire endures.

The part taken by the Indian Army Corps ¹ ought not to be omitted from this brief review of the three weeks' battle of Ypres-Armentières. The Lahore Division was the first to reach the battle line when the Ferozepore Brigade of this Division was sent on October 22nd to support the Cavalry Corps under General Allenby, which was holding the ground on the left bank of the Lys river between the 8rd Corps under General Pulteney and the 7th Division under General Capper, the remainder of the Division being used to reinforce General Smith-Dorrien, whose troops were being hard pressed in the neighbourhood of Neuve Chapelle. Later on, when the Meerut Division arrived along with the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade and the Jodhpur Lancers, the whole of the Indian Corps was concentrated under the command of Sir James Willcocks, and was able for the time being to relieve the 2nd Corps, which had become weakened by continuous fighting ever since October 11th. Sir John French speaks very highly of the Indian troops, and especially applauds the initiative and resource which they displayed in action. In spite of the difference in climate between India and Europe the Indian troops are keeping their health, and have fully sustained the reputation which they have earned for themselves in their many campaigns under the British flag.

The failure of Sir John French's plan is a further illustration of the difficulties in the way of the modern strategist who seeks

¹ The following was the composition of the Indian Contingent which landed at Marseilles in September 1914—

Anglo-Indian Corps: LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR J. WILCOCKS, K.C.B., ETC.,
COMMANDING.

<i>Meerut Division.</i> Lieut.-General C. A. Anderson, C.B.	<i>Lahore Division.</i> Lieut.-General H. B. Watkin, C.B.
<i>Bareilly Brigade</i> : Major-General F. MacLean, C.V.O., C.B.	<i>Jullender Brigade</i> : Major-General P. M. Carnegie, C.B.
<i>Dehra Dun Brigade</i> : Brig.-General C. E. Johnson.	<i>Sirhind Brigade</i> : Major-General J. M. S. Brunner.
<i>Garhwal Brigade</i> : Major-General H. D'U Keary, C.B., D.S.O.	<i>Ferozepore Brigade</i> : Brig.-General R. G. Egerton, C.B.
<i>Meerut Cavalry Brigade</i> : Brig.-General Fitz. J. M. Edwards, D.S.O.	<i>Amballa Cavalry Brigade</i> : Major-General C. P. W. Pirie.

to outwit his adversary by secrecy and surprise. The rapid developments of aviation, wireless telegraphy, electric communication, and mechanical transport have made concealment of movement practically impossible. If the movement of the British Army from the Aisne to the Lys river had only taken as many hours as it took days it is doubtful if it would have met with any better success. In neither theatre of war, and on neither side, has the strategist scored a success, which has not been neutralised by a counter-success on the part of his adversary. We must look to tactics for decisions which strategy can no longer obtain, and with the enormous masses of men now brought into the field this means long battles and increased bloodshed.

The defeat of the Prussian Guard at Ypres on November 11th was the final blow given to the mass tactics of the German infantry. Science once more triumphed over force. If any troops in the world could have done what the German Emperor ordered to be done at Ypres the Prussian Guard would surely have succeeded in accomplishing the task given them, but it was beyond their power; 15,000 Prussians were annihilated by 8000 Englishmen, not, we are willing to believe, because the Prussians are less brave than Englishmen, but because their leading was faulty, and their methods were wrong. Goose-step valour makes a brave show at Imperial manœuvres, but it is reduced to impotence when it comes up against the magazine rifle and Maxim's machine-gun.

The arrival of the opposing forces at the sea put a stop to further manœuvring, strategy thenceforward giving place to tactics. After the 15th October, 1914, the operations ceased to be a trial of skill between rival commanders, and became a trial of strength between their men. All along the 300-mile battle line, extending from the coast of Flanders to the Vosges Mountains, a continuous battle was in progress, the Germans fighting to break through the line opposed to their advance, the Allies fighting to prevent them succeeding. The main effort of the Germans was concentrated, as has just been seen, on the left flank of the Allies, which, resting on the sea, is for that reason the most secure of any point in the fighting line. The Kaiser must have foreseen this when he ordered the principal attack to be made in this direction, but political reasons left him no choice. His excuse for violating the neutrality of Belgium was military necessity, and he had to prove this necessity at all cost. Had he abandoned Belgium to the British Army and made his main effort elsewhere along the battle

front—at St. Mihiel, for instance, where the Germans established a *îlot de pont* over the Meuse—the bottom would have been knocked out of his plea. The Nemesis of his great crime was dogging his steps, and will continue to do so till justice has been done and punishment inflicted.

During the period covered by this chapter there was practically no change in the positions of the Allies during the past month, the general line of defence not having been altered in any material particular. That line extended in an approximately south-eastern direction from Nieuport to Armentières, with a central bastion at Ypres jutting out into Flanders. From Armentières the line stretched nearly due south till it reached the Oise at Compiègne, whence it ran in an easterly direction to Verdun, and from there nearly due south to Belfort, the Verdun salient forming a corner bastion thrown out towards the Moselle. There was an advance here and a retreat there, a local gain in one place, a local loss in another, but nothing occurred of a decisive nature on either side of the front occupied, nor was there any indication of any change being likely to take place at an early date. The fact is, both the Allies and the enemy were able to dispose of such large numbers that they found no difficulty for the moment in replacing casualties. The battle gradually took more and more the form of a gigantic siege, both forces having been compelled to dig themselves into their positions as a protection from the artillery fire opposed to them. Numerous local *points d'appui* were formed to serve as improvised field fortresses, and using these as tactical bases, the rival armies busied themselves in sapping up to their opponents' lines, taking such opportunities as presented themselves, chiefly by means of surprise night attacks, to make progress in the direction each side was facing.

The German plan of attack was to concentrate as many guns as could be massed in the locality chosen for the attack, and prepare the way for the infantry to advance after the enemy's powers of resistance had been weakened by an overwhelming artillery fire. The infantry were sent forward in battalions, regiments, and even brigades, massed together after the fashion of the Macedonian phalanx in ranks, which were often seven or eight deep, the men standing shoulder to shoulder, driven on by their officers, who with sword in one hand and revolver in the other threatened their men with death from behind if they flinched from meeting it in front. These tactics failed, as it was prophesied they would do by every British officer who has attended the Imperial German Manœuvres since the Boer

War. In trusting to mass formations being able to hack their way to victory, the Kaiser omitted to take account of the increased power conferred on the defence by the destructive effects of modern weapons. A few men well entrenched can check the advance of a column ten times their strength in numbers. It is not a question of courage, for when fighting in mass the Germans have as much collective courage as any troops in the world, but of what is possible or not possible of achievement in the face of magazine rifle and machine-gun fire. It was owing to the Kaiser's misapprehension of the possibilities which numbers and weight could accomplish under modern tactical conditions that his hacking tactics resulted in failure, and only led to the sacrifice of the flower of the German Army without anything to show for the losses sustained.

Massed guns can do what massed men are unable to accomplish. While the Germans have neglected the training of their infantry, they have given great attention to the training of their artillery, both as regards the tactical use and the technical service of their guns. As a man-killing weapon, the German field-gun is undoubtedly inferior to either the French or British field-gun,¹ but during the first year of the war the Germans compensated for this inferiority by bringing a numerical superiority of guns into the field, and it is from their fire that the Allies sustained the major part of their losses. The Germans had also a preponderance of heavy 6-inch howitzers, the fire of which was very destructive against the Allies' trenches. When the effect of these howitzers was felt during the early days of the battle on the Aisne river, Sir John French sent home for four batteries of 6-inch siege howitzers, and the French likewise brought up a reinforcement of 6·1-inch Q.F. howitzers, but the Germans maintained for some months a numerical preponderance of these particular pieces of ordnance, which are more useful than guns for trench warfare, on account of their searching powers and the high explosive shells which they can throw. When the French first entered on the war they had nothing heavier than their 6·1-inch (Rimailho) howitzer,

¹ COMPARATIVE TABLE OF BRITISH, FRENCH AND GERMAN Q.F. FIELD GUNS.

Nation.	Calibre (inches).	Muzzle velocity feet per second.	Weight of Shell in lb.	Extreme range (yards).
British . . .	3	1590	18·5	7500
French . . .	2·95	1739	16	9000
German . . .	3·03	1525	15	6600

while we had a few 9·45-inch siege howitzers which threw a shell of 280 lb. weight containing a bursting charge of 58 lb. of lyddite. Gradually as the value of heavy artillery became better understood effort was put forth on both sides to increase their artillery strength, which has since become a deciding factor in the war problem, but many months passed before the Allies were able to overtake the Central Powers and establish an artillery preponderance.

At the end of October Ypres became the crucial tactical point in the whole of the 500-mile battle front, which extended from the North Sea coast to the neutral territory of Switzerland; and it was against this point that the German Emperor over and over again threw the flower of his Army, only to see it torn and shattered into pieces by a single corps of that "contemptible little army," which blocked his way to Calais. Where strategy failed tactics succeeded. A decisive victory was won, and won by fighting, not by manœuvring. The tone of the Field-Marshal's dispatch reassured the public mind, and left no doubt that any further attempt to break through the British lines would meet with the same fate as those which had already failed. "That we have been able to attain success," wrote Sir John French, "and frustrate all the enemy's desperate efforts to break through our front, is due entirely to the marvellous fighting power, and the indomitable courage and tenacity of officers, N.C. officers, and men." No more triumphant dispatch has ever been penned by a British commander, and Sir John French is to be congratulated on having been able to contribute one of the most glorious chapters to the history of the British Army.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARATIONS FOR A LONG WAR

German preparations before the war—Enemy's initial advantage—Allies begin to prepare for a long war—French organising activities—Birth of the new British armies—Admirable organisation for mobilising the British Expeditionary Force—Breakdown of the recruiting organisation—Causes of this—Unsatisfactory arrangements for the supply of munitions—Want of War Office foresight—The strategical situation in the west explained—Future offensive possibilities.

AFTER the German defeat at Ypres there was a prolonged lull in the operations on the western front, neither side showing any disposition to resume the offensive. There were some slight tactical gains and losses to place to the credit and debit side of each of the rival forces, but they had no strategical significance, and were nothing more than the result of local attacks and counter-attacks undertaken by subordinate commanders to prevent their men suffering from a loss of *moral* which would otherwise follow on a long period of inactive trench life.

On December 17th General Joffre issued an order, which was found on a French officer who fell into the hands of the Germans, and which seemed to point to his intention to take offensive steps to "clear our Fatherland of the invader"; but whatever the circumstances under which the order was published, whether to throw dust in the enemy's eyes, or to raise the spirits of the French troops, nothing was done by the Commander-in-Chief in the sense suggested by the terms of his order. The stalemate continued, and, so far as the enemy was concerned, seemed likely to continue till the Allies were willing to negotiate for peace on the basis of a "draw." This is what was clearly in the mind of the German Emperor at the period now under review: for he ceased to talk about his mailed fist and shining armour, and claimed to be fighting for an "everlasting peace." Admirable aspiration! but after all that has passed it goes without saying that there can be no peace till the military power of Germany has been "finally and fully

destroyed." Unless this is done, and done effectively, once and for all time, peace will only be an armed truce, the reign of terror will continue more aggressively than before, and the last state of Europe will be worse than the first.

"Saucius ejurat pugnam gladiator, et idem
Immemor antiqui vulneris arma capit."¹

During the first months of the war the German Emperor was master of the situation. For twenty-five years he had been secretly preparing for a war which was to satisfy his craving for World Power. All his preparations were made and all his plans laid. Though suspicious of his intentions, when the war-cloud burst Europe was taken by surprise. France was only half ready for war, and England only ready to defend herself. Russia was far away. Belgium was unconscious of her danger. The duchy of Luxemburg was secured by Treaty. The aggressor had it all his own way, and he went on it with ruthless disregard of any law either of God or man which stood in his road to Victory: *Deutschland über Alles*.

Happily for the world's future the Emperor's mastery was short-lived. After six months of war the initiative in the west passed out of his hands into those of the Allied Powers. How this came about is within the memory of all who have been following the course of events. Belgium led the way. To their eternal honour the Belgian people rose as one man to resist the invaders of their land. Liège will for ever be a landmark in European history, for there the first blow was struck for Right against Might. Twenty thousand German soldiers were made to bite the dust as the penalty for their Emperor's crime. The German Army reeled under the blow, and then went on its way till a second blow was struck on the Marne river, and a third in Flanders. November 11th is a red-letter day for the Allies, for on that day the flower of the German Army, the Prussian Guard, was cut to pieces in attempting to storm the British position at Ypres. Thenceforth the Germans, relinquishing the offensive, concentrated effort on strengthening their defensive positions, and securing possession of the territory which they had won. About this time General Count Moltke resigned his office as Chief of the German General Staff, and was replaced by General Falkenhayn, the Minister

¹ "The swordsman when wounded forswears the arena,
Then forgetful of his wounds he draws the sword again."

OVID: *Epistula ex Ponto*, I, 5, 37.

of War. The cause of his resignation was understood at the time to have been due to his disagreement with the Kaiser in regard to the strategical conduct of the campaign in the west. Count Moltke was in favour of an attack being made from the region of Verdun, while the Kaiser insisted on the plan of attack from Flanders. It has been suggested that the reasons for the northern attack on the British position in Flanders were political, and that Count Moltke favoured the plan of breaking through the French centre on purely military grounds. There is, however, no reason to think that the Kaiser had any other motive than to defeat the British Army, cut Sir John French off from his sea-base, and roll back the left wing of the Allies. We have only to glance at the map to see how dangerous a situation would have been created for the German Armies if Count Moltke's strategy had been approved. Breaking the enemy's centre was Napoleon's favourite tactical method of beating his adversary, but with the large numbers of men brought into the field to leave the flanks intact, and endeavour to force a way through the centre of the Allies' line, would have been to have courted the very disaster which General Joffre was preparing to inflict on his enemy if he had committed himself to so faulty a plan of campaign. Strategically the Kaiser's plan was correct, and though it failed in execution it is quite certain that no other would have succeeded.

Meanwhile the Allies were busily occupied in making up leeway, and preparing for an offensive campaign, which was to be put into operation as soon as the preparations were complete. The French depots were full to overflowing with recruits under training, while the arsenals and workshops were occupied day and night in turning out reserves of guns, rifles, and ammunition, which were insufficient when war came upon them. We in England, under the energetic direction of Lord Kitchener, were making extraordinary efforts, not only to equip our new armies, but also to provide our Allies with boots, clothing, accoutrements, and other manufactured articles, which Germany and Austria could no longer supply. As Lord Kitchener pointed out in his first speech in the House of Lords, it takes longer to equip an army for war than to train it to fight. The men who came forward for the new armies were as a rule both physically and morally superior to the ordinary peace recruit, and four to six months' training was as much as they need before being ready to go to the front; but horses had to be found, besides men, and rifles, and guns, and ammunition,

and transport, and all the other requisite accessories of a fighting force which is intended to take the field at a distance from its base. If it had been merely a question of adding recruits to existing *cadres* the task would have been easy enough; but the new armies were composed of new formations, requiring fresh *cadres* to be created both for the staff and troops. Lord Kitchener promised that some of the newly raised troops would be ready by the spring of 1915, but he never disguised the fact that many months would be required before an army of the strength which was contemplated by Parliament could be got ready for war.

For the moment the intention of the Government was to place and maintain in the field six separate armies, two of which were already at the front, while the other four were still under training in England, or behind the fighting line in France. Each of these armies was composed of three army corps. The commanders of the six armies were notified in army orders, as also was the constitution of the four new armies. By the end of November the six divisions which composed the original Expeditionary Force had been increased to thirty-five, the distribution being as follows—

1ST ARMY: GEN. SIR DOUGLAS HAIG.

1st Corps, comprising the 1st and 2nd Divisions.
4th Corps, comprising the 7th and 8th Divisions.
Anglo-Indian Corps, comprising the Meerut and
Lahore Divisions.

2ND ARMY: GEN. SIR HORACE SMITH-DORRIEN.

2nd Corps, comprising the 3rd and 5th Divisions.
3rd Corps, comprising the 4th and 6th Divisions.
5th Corps, of which one Division only has been formed.

3RD ARMY: GEN. SIR ARCHIBALD HUNTER.

6th Corps, comprising the 9th and 10th Divisions.
7th Corps, comprising the 11th and 12th Divisions.
8th Corps, comprising the 13th and 14th Divisions.

4TH ARMY: GEN. SIR IAN HAMILTON.

9th Corps, comprising the 15th and 16th Divisions.
10th Corps, comprising the 17th and 18th Divisions.
11th Corps, comprising the 19th and 20th Divisions.

5TH ARMY : GEN. SIR LESLIE RUNDLE.

12th Corps, comprising the 21st and 22nd Divisions.

18th Corps, comprising the 28rd and 24th Divisions.

14th Corps, comprising the 25th and 26th Divisions.

6TH ARMY : GEN. SIR BRUCE HAMILTON.

15th Corps, comprising the 27th and 28th Divisions.

16th Corps, comprising the 29th and 30th Divisions.

17th Corps, comprising the 31st and 32nd Divisions.

The departure from the path of reticence, which the publication of the above information entailed, was considered desirable in order to create an atmosphere of public confidence, and show what was being done in the way of initial preparations for the long and sanguinary war to which the country was committed. After a few weeks the names, numbers, and distribution of the various divisions were withdrawn from the Army List on the grounds of military necessity, and in order to conceal our preparations from the enemy's knowledge. The armies, as constituted above, were subsequently broken up, and the various divisions re-allotted according to the requirements of the moment, and the degree of fighting efficiency which each attained. As stated in Chapter I of this volume the number of the divisions was subsequently increased to 70, in addition to one naval and 12 overseas divisions, while further formations are still in course of organisation.

The War Office machinery proved to be more efficient than was generally expected before it was submitted to the test of war. The mobilisation of the Expeditionary Force was carried out with clock-like regularity according to a pre-arranged time-table which had been drawn up under Lord Haldane's supervision. Mobilisation was ordered at 11 p.m. on the 4th August, and on the evening of the 12th day (16th August) after the order had been given two army corps with a cavalry division and the necessary troops for the lines of communication, were landed in France. No other country could have done the same, or anything like the same, in the time mentioned. Italy took a month, when there was no danger seawards, to mobilise and land 25,000 men in Tripoli, while our War Office and Admiralty working together took twelve days to land a force five times as great in France with the fleet of the next strongest Power in Europe watching for a chance to attack. After the first disembarkation the work

of reinforcing the Expeditionary Army went on continuously, and by the middle of November Sir John French had under his command four British Corps (eight divisions) and one Anglo-Indian Corps, besides three cavalry divisions, and Reserve troops which daily increased in strength on the lines of communication.

When Lord Kitchener called for recruits for the new armies which Parliament authorised him to raise they came in so fast that it was impossible for the depots to arrange for their reception, and the result was congestion, which caused some temporary inconvenience, but not greater than might have been expected under the abnormal circumstances of the situation. The overflow increased so rapidly that men had to be sent to their homes to wait their turn to be called up as soon as clothing and arms were available. Gradually order was established out of chaos, and by the end of November the organisation for raising and distributing recruits was fairly satisfactory.¹ On the 10th November the Prime Minister said we had under arms a Regular Army of 1,100,000 men, including those at the front, but excluding men of the Territorial Army. Later on he said that not less than 700,000 men had joined the Regular Army, and 200,000 men the Territorial Force since the 10th August. Thirty thousand recruits joined the Army every week, and the rate was maintained throughout the winter and spring, so well did the manhood of the country respond to the call of the Government.

The arrangements for equipping the new levies, and providing them with the necessary guns and munitions, were less satisfactory. Contracts for stores were made, but no steps were taken to ensure their fulfilment, nor was any attempt made to organise the industrial resources of the country. In this respect the War Office failed to rise to the occasion. Naval and military officers were competing with one another for the

¹ It is now generally admitted that the new levies would have been raised more smoothly and rapidly if the Territorial Force Association had been exclusively used for the purpose. Though he was a great organiser, when Lord Kitchener came to the War Office on the outbreak of war he had no knowledge of its methods, and had no time to study them. Having to act at once he started with a clean slate, and decided to raise the new armies outside the machinery which Lord Haldane had previously prepared in anticipation of future expansion. Two rival and overlapping organisations, New Army and Territorial, were set up, each competing with the other for recruits, who had to choose between alternative conditions of service. If recruits had all joined up through the agency of the County Associations there would have been unification instead of duplication of machinery, and a consequent saving of both labour and money. The same argument applies with even greater force to the officers who are working together under different conditions of service.

supply of munitions, while there was no superior officer charged with the duty of deciding between their respective claims to priority. This want of organisation led to overlapping of effort, and to a grievous waste of time, labour, and strength, the effect of which was to paralyse the efforts of the troops in the field at the time when they were undertaking joint operations with our Allies. The matter was put right later on, but not till the supply of munitions had been taken out of the hands of the Secretary of State for War, and given over to a new department outside the control of the War Office.

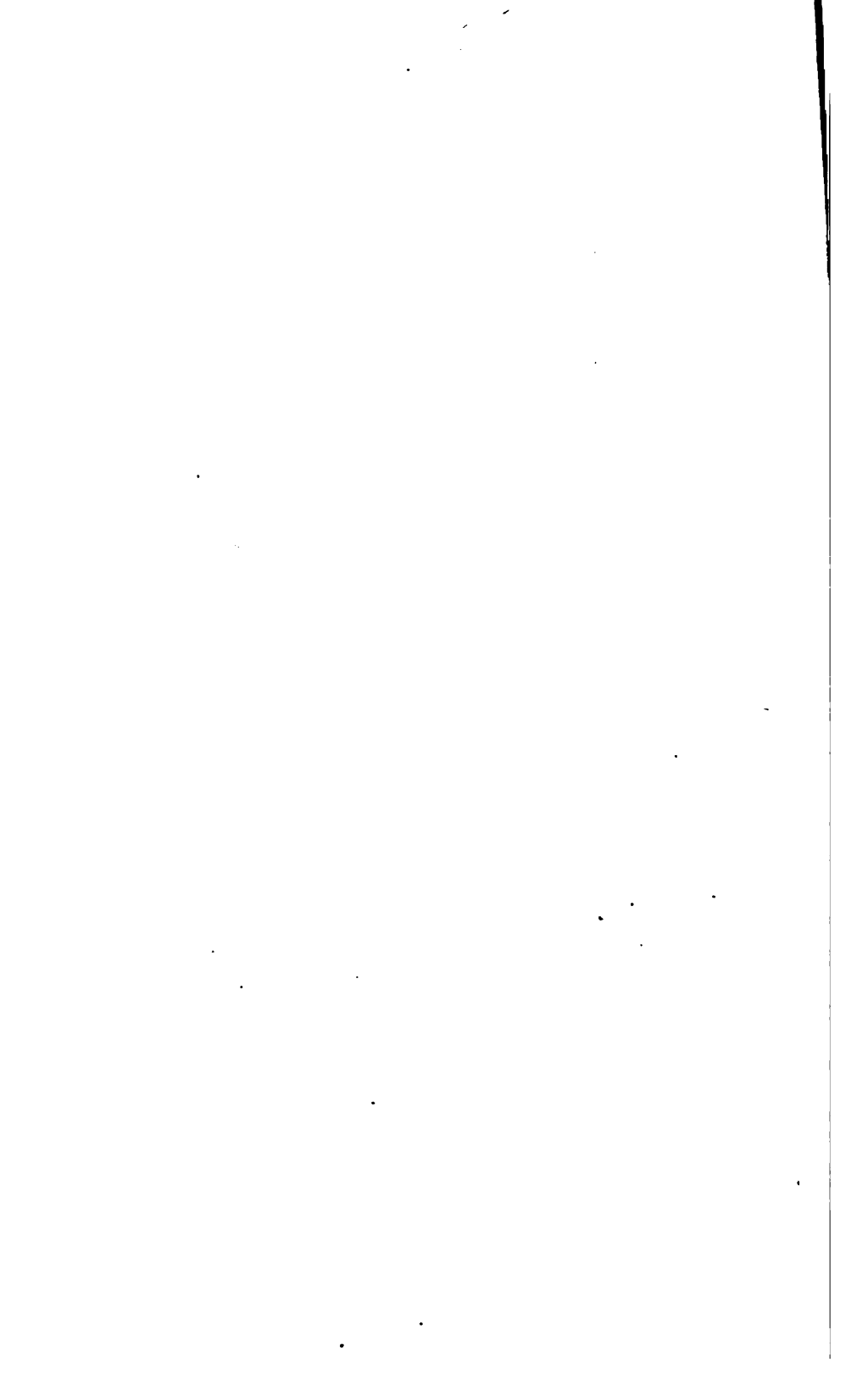
It will now be interesting to examine the general situation in the western theatre of war, and ascertain which direction offers the best chances of success for offensive operations undertaken by the Allied commanders with the object of putting an end to the existing stalemate. Now, as always, the strategical flanks are the weak points of an enemy's battle-front. At an early period of the campaign in the west the Allied commanders had it in mind to turn the right flank of the German line by an advance into Belgium, and the British Army was moved from the Aisne to the Lys river with this intention. The movement failed, as we know, in its inception for reasons which have been fully explained in Chapter V, and which need not be repeated. Since then Belgium has been converted into a gigantic field fortress with line after line of entrenchments armed with heavy guns of position, the coast-line being specially secured from attack seawards by powerful batteries far enough removed from the shore to be out of range of the fire of hostile ships, and yet near enough to prevent any attempt to land troops. Even if it were worth while to incur the loss of life, which an invasion of Belgium across the frontier of West Flanders would now entail, there are reasons besides the cost which make it expedient to leave this flank alone for the moment, a close watch being kept on the position so that opportunity may immediately be seized to take advantage of any weakening of the enemy's force in this direction. Supposing the Germans were driven out of Belgium, they would fall back on the particular part of their Rhine frontier where their military strength is incontestably strong, the narrow *trouée* between the Eifel mountains and the *enclave* of Dutch territory, which extends close up to Aix-la-Chapelle. There would be no room for deployment, and at the end of their advance the Allies would come up against the fortress of Cologne, which bars the way over the Rhine. Were Belgium not in German occupation this route would have no attraction for

French strategists, while under existing conditions it seems only wasting time to consider its practicability. The Germans must be turned out of Belgium, but the Allies must choose their own way of bringing this about, and not allow their adversary to dictate it to them.

The left strategical flank of the German position is more open to attack than the right flank, and quite apart from recent development an offensive across their eastern frontier has always found greater favour with French strategists than an offensive through Belgium. Unlike the northern frontier defences, which had been allowed to fall into disuse, and most of which had been practically dismantled before the war, those of the eastern frontier have been brought up to modern date, and a French army concentrated in the Upper Moselle Valley for the invasion of South Germany would start from a secure base, which has been daily growing stronger since the opening of the war. This line of operations has another initial advantage over the Belgian line in that the Rhine, which is the main line of German resistance, is only a short distance, varying from thirty miles in Upper Alsace to ninety in Lorraine, from the French base behind the Vosges mountains, whilst the line of communication through Belgium would be lengthened out to 150-180 miles.

The two main routes from Eastern France into South Germany are through the Belfort *trouée* into Baden, and through the Palatinate into Bavaria. After crossing the Rhine between Strassburg and Bâle an invading army using the first of these two routes would at once come up against the Black Forest, which, as will be presently explained, is not the obstacle it used to be, but is none the less not well adapted for the rapid movement of large bodies of troops. The more natural, direct, and historic line of invasion passes through the plateau of Lorraine on the west side of the northern Vosges mountains between the Hunsrück and Hardt mountains. This has always been the main thoroughfare to and from France, and into and out of Bavaria. An advance along this route would have for its first objective Mannheim, which is admitted to be the weakest point on the Rhine frontier. The question of fortifying it has been often raised before and since 1870, but it remains an open town, although the place could speedily be put into a state of defence by the same system of field trenches which have enabled the Germans to oppose so successful a resistance to the Allies' offensive in Flanders and the north of France. Two bridges connect the city, which is on the right





bank of the Rhine, with the port of Ludwigshafen on the left bank, where there is a very large military station with platform accommodation for loading eight military trains at the same time. The railway station at Mannheim is one of the largest in Germany, and the depot of vast railway stores. Mannheim would certainly be the point of passage of a French army which had been victorious in the palatinate. The railways by Kaiserslautern and Saarbrücken would serve to keep up communication with the French frontier, and when entrenched Mannheim would become the pivot of all operations on both banks of the Rhine, and between North and South Germany, turning the fortresses of Germersheim and Mainz. It will be remembered that Mannheim, which is the starting-point of the steam navigation of the Rhine, was the base of supplies for the 8rd German Army in 1870, and the great number of lines which lead to it from all parts of Germany renders it probable that it will again play a similar rôle in case of a successful invasion of Germany from this side of France.

How to reach Mannheim is a problem which will tax all the skill of the French General Staff, and which in any case cannot be solved till the German Armies have been decisively beaten in the field, and driven back to their Rhine frontier. Supposing, as is considered probable, that the French concentration took place on the Upper Moselle between the entrenched camps of Toul and Epinal, the line of advance through Lorraine would pass between the fortresses of Metz and Strassburg, which are eighty miles apart, and are both *places d'armes* of the first magnitude. It would be necessary either to subdue or mask these fortresses before moving on to the Rhine, and siege operations on a scale commensurate with the size and armament of these strong places would use up at least half a million men.

The Saar is the first line of German defence against an invading army coming through Lorraine from the Moselle base, and this line has recently been strengthened in anticipation of possible eventualities. The right bank of the river commands the left, and is so precipitous as to be practically unassailable by troops crossing over from the left bank. The right flank of the position rests on the Moselle at Trèves; in the centre is the fortified *point d'appui* of Saarlouis, while the left flank is secured by the entrenched position at Saargemünd. To this line reinforcements from the Rhine can be rapidly conveyed by the railway from Coblenz to Trèves, and by the four railways converging on Saarbrück from Mainz, Worms, Mannheim, and

Strassburg, while there is a lateral railway running along the whole extent of the position from Trèves to Saargemünd, and beyond it. The conditions of this problem, which has been the subject of study by many military writers, have been completely changed by the action of Germany in violating the neutrality of the duchy of Luxembourg. Had its neutrality been respected, the left flank of the French Army on its way to the Saar river, after masking Metz, would have been protected by neutral territory, which is now in the enemy's possession, and makes it impossible to advance till the French have secured all the passages over the Moselle from Metz up to Trèves. This means a subsidiary campaign which would have to be undertaken from the Verdun base simultaneously with the movement into Lorraine.

After crossing the Rhine at Mannheim the next objective for an invading army would be the line of the river Main, which Napoleon made his advanced base for his Jena campaign of 1806; but no advance could be made up this river till after the subjugation and occupation of Mainz by the Allied Forces. Mainz is situated on the left bank of the Rhine just where the Main flows into it, and a glance at the map shows how strategically important is its position, standing as it does as sentinel over the main line of advance into Southern Germany, and commanding several lines of railway. Mainz is the central German *point d'appui* on the Rhine, and has been called the "key of Germany." The fortifications are very complicated, having been built at different periods since 1604. Large sums of money have been spent on the fortress since 1870, and it has been converted into an entrenched camp requiring a garrison of 21,000 men; but even now the place is not considered to be secure against the attack of the heavy howitzer batteries, which we have been constructing in England for the past six months. It must be borne in mind that the Germans trust much more to men and railways than to fortresses both for offensive and defensive purposes. There are only six fortresses—Wessel, Cologne, Coblenz, Mainz, Germersheim, and Strassburg—along the whole length of the Rhine (840 miles) from Holland to Switzerland, the greater part of the French fortresses which fell into German hands after the rectification of the frontier in 1871 having been demolished. Money has always been available for railways. More than a dozen railways from all parts of Germany lead to the Rhine frontier, while to connect the whole railway system, and to enable a superiority of force to be concentrated in a few hours at any threatened

point, a double line of railway follows each bank of the Rhine throughout its length.

Before attempting the invasion of Bavaria through Lorraine it is necessary that the French should secure their extreme right flank by the effective occupation of Alsace, and this can be done with a subsidiary army based on the second-line entrenched camps at Langres and Besançon. The French have been putting out feelers into Alsace during the past six weeks, troops from the Belfort garrison having pushed their way for some twelve miles or more across the frontier in order to establish *points d'appui* for a future advance on Mulhouse. Though the Black Forest does not lend itself to the rapid movements of troops it is no longer the impenetrable barrier it used to be between the Rhine and Danube. Three lines of railway lead from the Upper Danube to the valley of the Rhine, one from Donau-eschingen to Freiburg, another to Offenburg, and a third to Carlsruhe. It may be that in the near future we shall see a repetition of Napoleon's strategy in 1805, and another French descent into the valley of the Danube with the intention of giving a hand to an Italian invasion of Bavaria through the Austrian Tyrol.

Enough has perhaps been said to indicate some of the difficulties confronting the Allies. None of them are insurmountable. Our task is hard, but there never was a worthier one. Victory will not come at once; but it will in the end. With brave soldiers and skilful leaders—we have both—everything is possible. To get the Germans out of Belgium and France is the first result to work for, but only as antecedent to others, which must follow. The war must be carried into the enemy's country, and until this is done it is useless to talk about victory, or think about peace.

CHAPTER VII

THE SECOND INVASION OF POLAND

November 15th, 1914, to January 15th, 1915

Position in Poland in the middle of November—Hindenburg's new plan of campaign—Mackensen's advance into Central Poland—His army held up on the Bzura—German movement into Western Poland—Failure to reach the Narew—Russians menace Cracow—Counter-movement of the Austrians—Eastern Galicia cleared of the enemy's troops—Conquest of the Bukovina—Masterly strategy of the Grand Duke Nicholas—Turkish defeat on the Caucasus frontier.

THE narrative of the operations in the eastern theatre of war was carried down in Chapter III to the second week in November, when the Austro-German Army, which had advanced with so much show of force up to the Vistula, was defeated, broken up, and pushed back to the frontier, pursued by the Russians with unwonted energy. The retreat, however, was by no means a rout, and before the defeated army reached the frontier, it managed to shake off the pursuit, partly by destroying all railways, roads, and bridges on its way back, and partly also by putting up strong rearguards to cover the retirement. Detaching themselves from their Allies, the Germans fell back in two main groups, one making its way down the left bank of the Vistula to Thorn, the other crossing the Warta river at Sieradz, and in due course reaching Kalisz. The Austrians, who had been fighting on the line Ivangorod-Sandomier, fell back slowly along the right bank of the upper Vistula to Cracow, where they were joined by the Austrian Army of Galicia, which had retreated from the San in conformity with the general withdrawal of the enemy's armies from Poland.

The Russian cavalry was very active during the retreat, patrols being thrown out all over the front along which the enemy had both advanced and retired. On November 3rd Soldau was occupied by a Russian cavalry brigade, which broke up the strategical railway in the direction of Thorn. Two days later another cavalry brigade reached Nieshawa, eighteen miles from Thorn, while a third brigade crossed the

Warta river at Kolo, and cut the Thorn-Oppeln railway at Pleschen. Further south Galicia was being steadily cleared of Austrian troops, some of whom retreated across the Carpathian passes, while others made good their direct retreat to Cracow. It looked as though the Grand Duke Nicholas had cleared the enemy out of both Poland and Galicia, and had nothing left to do but to restore his railway communications with Warsaw, and then prepare for the invasion of Silesia.

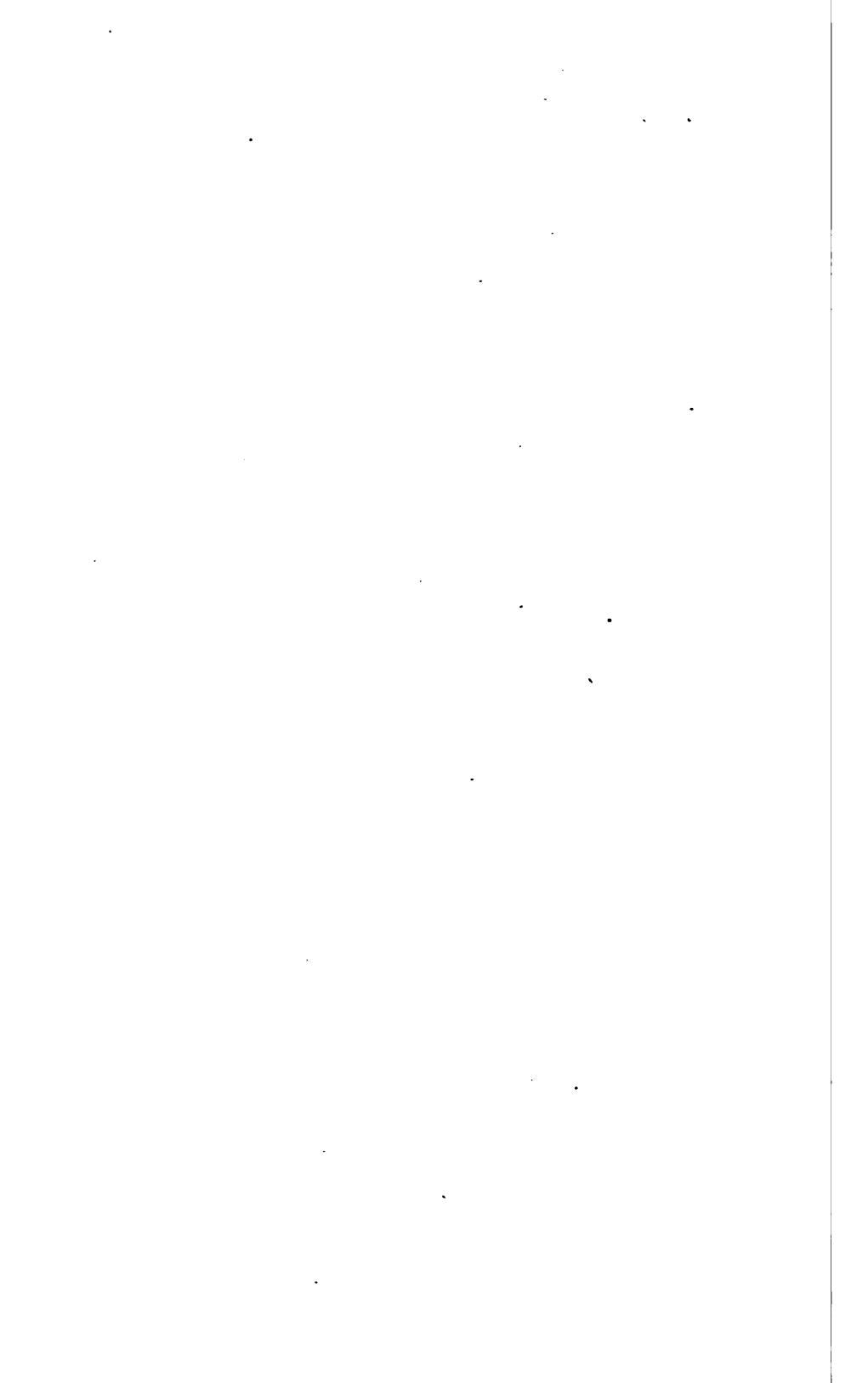
He soon found, however, that Field-Marshal Hindenburg was not so easily disposed of. Leaving his army to find its own way to the frontier the Marshal hurried back to Thorn, summoned General Mackensen to his aid from Danzig, and forthwith formulated another plan of campaign, by means of which he intended to turn the tables on his antagonist, and carry the war back to Poland. The German commander in East Prussia was first of all reinforced, and ordered to remain strictly on the defensive in the entrenched positions which he had taken up guarding the eastern approaches to the Masurian lakes. A large central army was ordered to concentrate at Thorn, partly composed of troops falling back from Poland, partly of new formations brought rapidly up to the rendezvous with the aid of that admirable railway system to which reference was made in Chapter III. The exact strength of this army is not known, but the *Army Messenger*, the official organ of the Russian War Office, estimated it to be composed of twelve corps, which would give it an approximate strength of 500,000 men. This force was intended to move rapidly up the left bank of the Vistula, and by threatening Warsaw force the Russians to concentrate between the Vistula and the Warta, by this means taking pressure off the Silesian frontier. After placing General Mackensen in executive command of the Thorn Army, Hindenburg went down to Kalisz, and there with equal promptitude he collected another army, which was destined to operate against the left flank of the Russian Army opposing Mackensen's advance. The German commander holding the defensive position on the line Czeszochowa-Cracow covering the approaches into Silesia meanwhile received similar orders to those given to the General on the frontier of East Prussia. He was under no circumstances to attempt an offensive movement, but was to hold on to his entrenched position with as few men as might be found necessary for the purpose. The Marshal, who had been appointed Generalissimo of both Austrian and German troops in the eastern theatre of war, then went on to Cracow, where in consultation

with the Austro-Hungarian General Staff he organised an offensive movement to be undertaken by Austro-Hungarian troops with the object of re-conquering Galicia, and saving Cracow from the attack with which it was being threatened by the Russians advancing up both banks of the upper Vistula.

Hindenburg's plan of campaign covered the whole of the eastern theatre of war, and was so conceived as to neutralise the initial strategical advantage which the Russians conferred on Russia. The success of an offensive operation on the big scale required by modern war conditions depends primarily on railway communications, and these are abundant in the eastern provinces of Prussia as they are in Poland. The map on the opposite page shows this at a glance. It will be seen that there are two practically parallel strategical railways running all round Poland with numerous lines leading from all the important junctions to the frontier. To avoid confusing the eye with too much detail the whole of the railway system is not drawn on the map, but the main lines are shown, and it will be seen at once how easy was Marshal Hindenburg's task compared with that which he had to perform in fronted the Grand Duke Nicholas. North and west of the frontier there is not a single lateral railway line in Poland compared with the main trunk lines which lead down to the German frontier. Admirable as the Russian organisation has proved to be, the movements of the Russian armies have been paralysed throughout the war by the inferiority of the Russian railway communications as compared with those of the Germans on the other side of the frontier. Though the Grand Duke had to manœuvre on interior, and his adversary on exterior, there has been no occasion when his movements have not been forestalled by the German commander owing to the facilities which he has possessed for the rapid concentration of troops at any given strategical point. That he should have achieved such success he has done is a testimony to his own strategical skill and also to the resisting powers of his troops when they have been called upon to fight delaying actions while gaining time for the arrival of reinforcements.

Mackensen opened the new campaign on the 10th November by deploying his army on a fifty-mile front between the Vistula and Warta rivers, and making use of both rivers for bringing up supplies of food and ammunition. Pushing the Russian advanced guards back, Mackensen reached the Wlochowek-Kolo on the 18th, when the Russians, taken by surprise, fell back behind Kutno. Mackensen then advanced





to the line Plock-Leczyca-Uniejow, where a three days' battle took place, ending with the further retirement of the Russians to the line Zdunskawola-Lodz-Bzura river on the 18th. Then began a series of violently contested battles which have been raging more or less intermittently up to the present day, Germans and Russians alternately taking the offensive without any positive decisions being obtained on either side. On the 20th, two German corps, including some battalions of the Prussian Guard, succeeded in breaking through the Russian line at Strykow, and reaching Koljuschki, an important railway junction on the Warsaw-Czestochowa line. There they were pulled up by Russian reinforcements arriving from the East, and were driven south to Rzgow and Tushin. They were surrounded on three fronts by Russian troops, but owing to the non-arrival of a certain Russian General at the rendezvous fixed, they succeeded on the 28rd, but not till after they had suffered heavy loss, in cutting their way through to the north, and rejoining the main German Army at Strykow. Finding his further advance eastwards blocked, General Mackensen took up an entrenched position extending from Schadek through Zgierz to Ilayo, on the Vistula. The Russian right wing, which had meanwhile been clinging to the Vistula in the neighbourhood of Gombin, then fell back to the lower Bzura river in order to defend the approaches to Warsaw. At this time there were twelve German corps deployed between Schadek and the Vistula.

The fighting during the operations had been very severe, and the Germans were much shaken by the enormous losses which they had suffered, and by the knowledge of their failure to reach Warsaw. By the end of November, Mackensen's position was very precarious, and unofficial news from Petrograd led many to think that his retreat was imminent. On the 1st December, however, Hindenburg's flank movement against the Russian left wing began to take effect, large bodies of Austro-German troops crossing the Warta river in the neighbourhood of Sieradz, and moving towards the line Zdunskawola-Lask. This was another surprise attack for the Russians, and the Grand Duke had to meet it by withdrawing troops from the Silesian frontier till reinforcements could be hurried up from the Bug river. The movement came just in time to save Mackensen from retreating, and gave that General a fresh lease of life in Poland. Finding the flank attack was developing on a considerable scale, the Grand Duke Nicholas decided to withdraw his left wing from its position west of Lodz

in order to preserve his communications with Warsaw. Lodz was evacuated by the Russians on the 5th December, and occupied by the Germans on the 6th. On this date the Russian line of defence extended from the Warta river to the Vistula through Novoradomsk-Petrokof-Lowicz-Ilayo.

About this time another movement of German troops was made from the direction of Soldau and Mlawa with the intention of reaching the Narew river, and getting in rear of Warsaw. Where this army came from is uncertain, but it was probably composed of troops brought up from the fortress of Danzig and Königsberg, reinforced with other troops detached from the German Army operating on the northern frontier of East Prussia. On the 6th December, this force reached the line Ctechanow-Przasnysz, but it never got nearer than this to the Narew river, for it was attacked on the following day by the Russian Army, which had been watching this part of the frontier, and was driven back into East Prussia.¹

Meanwhile, during the second week in December, General Mackensen, with his eye always on Warsaw, began to concentrate effort against the Russian positions west of the lower Bzura river, a specially vigorous offensive being directed against Sochaczew with a view to securing the passage over the river at that point. The German attack met with no appreciable success. The Russians gave up some ground west of the Bzura, but held on to all the passages over that river from Lowicz to Ilayo. A "victory" was claimed in a bulletin issued on December 17th by German Main Headquarters, but the claim was officially repudiated in a *communiqué* of the Russian General Staff.

While events were progressing as described in Poland, the Russian Army of Galicia, under General Ivanoff, after detaching a force to invest the fortress of Przemyśl, was steadily pushing its way through Western Galicia, and securing possession of the passes into Hungary over the Carpathian mountains. On his way west, General Ivanoff met with continuous opposition from the Austrians, who disputed the passages over each of the tributary rivers, the Wistoka and the Dunajec, which rising in the Carpathians, flow north across the province of Galicia into the Vistula. General Ivanoff succeeded, however, in driving the Austrians before his advance, and during his three weeks' progress through the province he captured as many as 50,000 prisoners of war. The Russian advanced guard reached Wieliczka, some five miles south of Cracow, on the

¹ See map facing page 102, Chapter VIII.

1st December, while the main Russian Army was deployed on both banks of the Vistula along the line Proszowice-Niepolowice-Bochnia. The investment of Cracow seemed imminent.

The situation, however, again became modified, owing to a new offensive movement of the Austrians—another of Hindenburg's surprises—who crossed the Carpathians in considerable force at the beginning of the second week in December, capturing Neu Sandec on the 12th, and concentrating on a line east and west of the Dunajec valley, thus compelling the Russians to fall back from Cracow to oppose this new attempt to re-conquer Galicia. At this time there were said to be nearly 200,000 Austrian troops north of the Carpathians, but the Grand Duke met this concentration with a counter concentration of Russian troops, who brought the Austrian advance to a standstill, and prevented the enemy from getting possession of the important strategic railway which connects Cracow with Przemyśl.

During the next month continuous attempts were made by General Mackensen to cross the Bzura and Rawka rivers at various points, but they only resulted in failure. Attacks in mass formation were first of all tried, and when these tactics failed resort was had to sapping with the same result. Man for man the Russian is a better fighter than the German, especially when it comes to "bludgeon work" in the trenches. In a bayonet fight the German soldier is seen at his worst. Up to the middle of January 1915 not a single German had succeeded in reaching the east bank of either of the two rivers mentioned above, and Warsaw seemed as far off as ever. Lower down in South Poland the Russians continued to hold the line of the Nida against repeated attacks by General Dankl's troops, who remained pinned to their positions on the right bank. The Russians at this time held a nearly continuous line of entrenched positions extending across the centre of Poland along a 150-mile front from the lower Vistula west of Warsaw, to the upper east of Cracow. They on their side made no attempt to advance westwards, being content to stand on the defensive, while the Germans wasted their strength in their efforts to get to Warsaw.

All this time continuous fighting took place in Galicia, resulting in the Austro-Hungarian Army which had come across the Carpathian Mountains being driven back into Hungary with heavy loss of men and *matériel*. More than 50,000 prisoners of war fell into Russian hands. East of the Dunajec river Galicia was now clear of the enemy. The Dukla Pass

was occupied by Russian troops on December 27th, and the Uszok Pass on January 4th. Two considerable sorties from Przemyśl were repulsed, and the investing cordon was drawn closer round the fortress. Austro-German troops still held the line of the Dunajec from Tarnow, which was in Russian possession, down to Neu Sandec, which was held by the enemy. Hindenburg fully realised the value of the Dunajec position, which was the last line of defence against a Russian Army advancing on Cracow, and he knew that if Cracow was lost Silesia would be lost too.

Having cleared Galicia, the Russians then started to clear the Bukovina with the object of securing their left strategical flank, and getting possession of the passes into Transylvania. Sturmetz and Radautz were occupied on December 31st, Suczawa on January 2nd, Gura Humora on the 4th, and Kimpolung on the 6th. Then a halt was ordered to allow time for concentration, and on the 16th the Russian advanced guards stormed the Kirlibaba pass, and were then in command of the two main routes into Hungary, the one leading to Maramaros-Sziget on the Visso river, and the other to Dees on the Szamos river. These movements opened up the prospect of a new theatre of war, with a new battle-front extending from the Bukovina to the Servian frontier, Roumanian intervention being at that time expected to take place in the early spring.

On his right strategical flank the Grand Duke Nicholas showed the same offensive activity as on his left. A new Russian movement was in process of development north of the lower Vistula in Poland. The first news we had of this movement was on the 6th January 1915, when a Petrograd *communiqué* informed the public that the right wing of a Russian army, the strength of which was not divulged, but which must have been considerable, seeing that it was advancing on a sixty-mile front, had made a successful attack on Rozawa, a town west of the Przasnysz-Mlawa road. Later on we heard that the central column of this new army had reached Radzonof, eight miles south-west of Mlawa, on the 12th January, while the left wing struck the Skrawa river west of the town of Sierpe on the 18th, and drove the Germans to the north. This brought the Russian Army, operating in the region, within forty miles of the fortress of Thorn.

A glance at the map of Poland which accompanies this chapter shows the significance of this movement. The whole of the right bank of the lower Vistula from Warsaw down to its junction with the Skrawa was in Russian possession. The

commander of the Russian Army, advancing in this direction, if he was supplied with bridging material, might at any point throw a force on to the left bank of the river, and intercept Mackensen's communication with Thorn. The situation in the middle of January was highly interesting, and presented an abundance of possibilities which might at any moment have become realities. The general position in the eastern theatre of war at this period of the campaign may be summed up by saying that in the centre of their 500-mile battle-line, extending from East Prussia to the Bukovina, the Russians were standing on the defensive, while on both strategical flanks they were developing offensive movements.

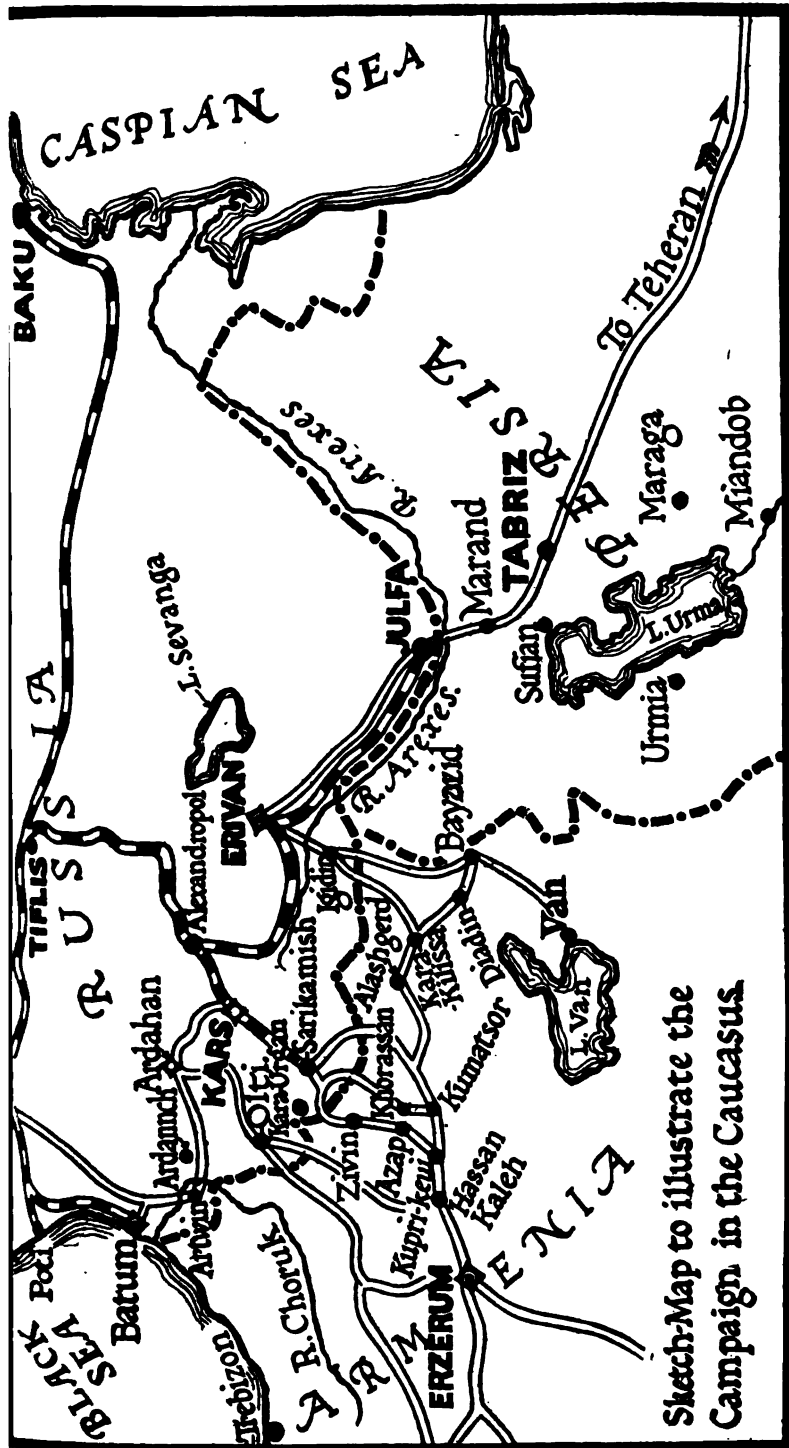
The conduct of the campaign by the Grand Duke Nicholas was marked by a combination of caution and resource which repeatedly saved the situation when it seemed well-nigh lost. He acted throughout the operations described above with a cool and calculating judgment, which never allowed his adversary to profit by the initial advantage, which he possessed, of being able to take the offensive. It was a duel between two strategists, one of whom was always attacking, and the other always defending, meeting thrust with counter thrust, refusing to take risks, and never accepting battle at strategical disadvantage. Never once did the Russian Generalissimo place his men in a false position, or make demands on their services to which they were unable to respond. Surprised by the sudden irruption of Mackensen into Poland, he ordered his troops to fall back till reinforcements could arrive in sufficient numbers to assure success. Surprised a second time by Hindenburg's movement from Kalisz, he withdrew his left wing to save his communications. Keeping an eye on both his flanks he was ever ready with a counter-stroke before there was time for his opponent to deliver his intended blow. On his side, the German commander played his cards with consummate skill, and though he committed errors he speedily rectified them. The further developments which took place in this wonderful campaign must be reserved for another chapter.

TURKISH DEFEAT IN THE CAUCASUS

When war broke out between Turkey and the Allied Powers early in November the first clash of arms took place on the Caucasus frontier, where the interests of Turkey and Russia had been in sharp conflict for many years past. Acting under

German inspiration, the Turks set their minds on regaining possession of the fortress of Kars, which they lost in 1878, their intention then being to use the fortress as a stepping stone to the seizure of the Caspian oil-wells at Baku. For this purpose they assembled at Erzerum the 9th, 10th, and 11th Turkish Corps and prepared for a march on Tiflis. Russia's ambition, on the other hand, was to reclaim Armenia, and rescue her co-religionists from the Turkish yoke, which had weighed so heavily on them since they came under Turkish rule.

General Woronzoff, who commanded the Russian Army of the Caucasus at the opening of the war, was first in the field. Crossing the frontier the day after the declaration of war, his troops occupied all the principal towns in the Alashgherd valley, including Bayazid, which is on the high-road from Trebizond to Teheran. A reconnaissance in force was at the same time pushed out towards Erzerum as far as Keupri Keui, where the Russian troops were pulled up by a Turkish force sent out from Erzerum, and fell back behind the frontier. The 9th, 10th, and 11th Turkish Corps were meanwhile preparing for an offensive campaign in the Caucasus under the direction of the German General Liman von Sanders, who was joined by Enver Pasha as nominal Commander-in-Chief early in December. The plan of campaign had Tiflis for its objective, and was to be worked out in this way. The 11th Corps was to hold the Russians in front, while the 9th and 10th Corps, advancing through Olti, were to execute a turning movement against the Russian left flank. The 1st Corps, which appears to have come by sea from Constantinople, and to have landed at Trebizond, was to make a still wider turning movement up the valley of the Chorokh, and after taking Ardahan was to move down on to Kars. What happened was this. The 9th Corps reached Sarykamish, a town about fifteen miles across the Russian frontier, and the southern terminus of the Tiflis-Kars railway, on December 26th, and was there attacked and practically annihilated by the Russians, who appear to have surrounded the Corps on all sides. The 10th Corps operating north of the 9th Corps was then attacked, and dispersed, the Turkish troops making the best of their way back to Olti with the Russian cavalry in pursuit. The 11th Corps, which had been holding back to give time for the turning movement to materialise, then took the offensive at Kara Urgan, a frontier village on the Erzerum-Sarykamish road, when a second battle took place, lasting over three days, from January 12th to 14th, and ending with the defeat and rout of the Turkish troops.



Sketch-Map to illustrate the Campaign in the Caucasus



who fell back in disorder on Erzerum with the Russians following hard on their heels. The left Turkish column composed of the 1st Corps appears to have met with an equally disastrous fate, for after reaching Ardahan on the first or second day of the New Year, it was attacked by another Russian force and likewise defeated. What became of this beaten corps has never been made known, but when it was last heard of the troops, broken up into fragments, were trying to escape along the banks of the Chorokh in the direction of Trebizond. The general result was that four corps of the Turkish army were practically destroyed.

Thus ended this ill-fated expedition, which ought never to have been undertaken with a half-equipped army of Turkish soldiers in a mountainous country, and in the middle of winter. General Liman von Sanders is a noted Krieg Spiel player, but on this occasion at any rate he did not prove a good general in the field. His plan of campaign was foredoomed to failure, for success depended on the co-operation of detached columns when co-operation was practically impossible under the conditions of the operation. The Russians were manœuvring on interior lines, while the Turks were operating by divergent routes. The Russian commander had railways to help him, the Turkish commander had none. The Russians knew their own country; the Turks were strangers to it. The consequence was that each of the Turkish Corps was beaten in detail before arriving at its appointed rendezvous. The Turkish soldiers fought bravely, but brave men are helpless when led by incompetent officers.

The moral consequences of this defeat were greater than the material results, for from the day when General Woronzoff gained his victory over Liman von Sanders German prestige in Constantinople began to wane. Unfortunately for the Turks, after their defeat in the Balkan War of 1912, they allowed the government to be seized by an ambitious gang of unscrupulous adventurers, headed by Enver, who had climbed into office over the dead body of Nazim Pasha. This misguided young man is the evil genius of Turkey, and is leading her blindfold to her doom. For the sake of holding office he has sold himself to the Germans, who are using him as their subservient tool for the furtherance of their aggressive designs in the east. Sooner or later he will disappear from the scene, but after what has happened it is impossible for Great Britain to acquiesce any longer in the existence of Turkish rule on this side of the Bosphorus.

CHAPTER VIII

WINTER FIGHTING

January 15th to April 15th

1915

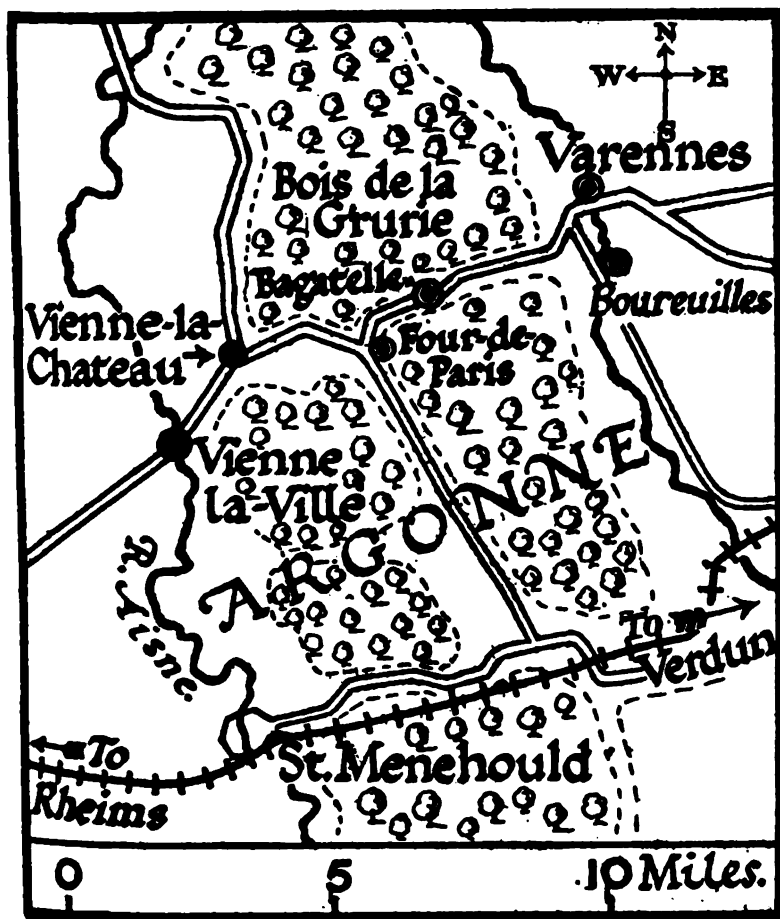
Position in the Argonne—French secure *points d'appui* in Alsace—Germans attack French in Flanders—Simultaneous attack on British position facing La Bassée—Failure of these attacks—Nemesis of the Kaiser's crime in seizing Belgium—Position in the eastern theatre of war—Austro-German Army invades Galicia—Three columns employed—Austrians reconquer the Bukovina—Defeat of the 10th Russian Army in East Prussia—Hindenburg again fails to reach the Narew—Fall of Przemyśl—General situation in the middle of April.

As will be seen from the contents of this chapter, the winter brought no relief to the opposing forces, who continued the struggle in both of the main theatres of war, regardless of weather conditions and with increased rather than diminished energy. In the west the fighting was local in character, nor could it well have been otherwise considering the length of the front occupied, the number of men engaged on either side, the strength of the artificial defences, and the impossibility of bringing superior force to bear except at specified points where opportunities for attack seemed to be favourable.

THE ARGONNE

In the Argonne local fighting was more continuous than anywhere else, for there the French had thrust in a wedge between the German defensive line north of the Aisne and the army known as the Crown Prince's, which was masking Verdun on the north. In this region the fighting was "fast and furious" for many days in succession. The Germans held a strong entrenched position east of the Argonne at Varennes, where the main highway through the centre of the forest leads to the Aisne river at Vienne-la-Ville, while the French were entrenched along the north of this road in that part of the Argonne forest which is known as the Bois de la Grurie. The Germans tried to get on to this road, and the French tried to prevent them. In spite of continuous attacks our Allies held

on to their positions, the enemy not having sufficient force in the locality to push home a determined attack through the thick woods, which were ill-adapted for the mass tactics of the German infantry.



Incidentally it may be here convenient to point out the strategical position of the fortress of Verdun, situated, as it is, at the north-eastern corner of the French line of defences, and jutting out like a huge bastion into the *trouée* between its forts and the frontiers of the Duchy of Luxemburg. After the

German retreat from the Marne in September, the French garrison, under the direction of General Sarrail, set to work to extend the defences of the place by pushing out entrenchments several miles in advance of the outlying forts, which encircle the town, the result being that at the period under review in this chapter there was no German force within twelve miles of the town. Verdun had been rendered immune from a bombardment such as that which reduced the fortresses of Liège and Antwerp. Heavy guns could not be brought into positions near enough to attack the forts, or reach the town with their fire, until a succession of pitched battles had been fought and won for possession of the sites occupied by French trenches. Verdun lost some of its defensive value when the German Emperor violated the neutrality of Luxemburg, but it still stands sentry over the north-east salient of the French line of defence, while as an offensive base for a movement into Lorraine its value has in no respect been discounted.

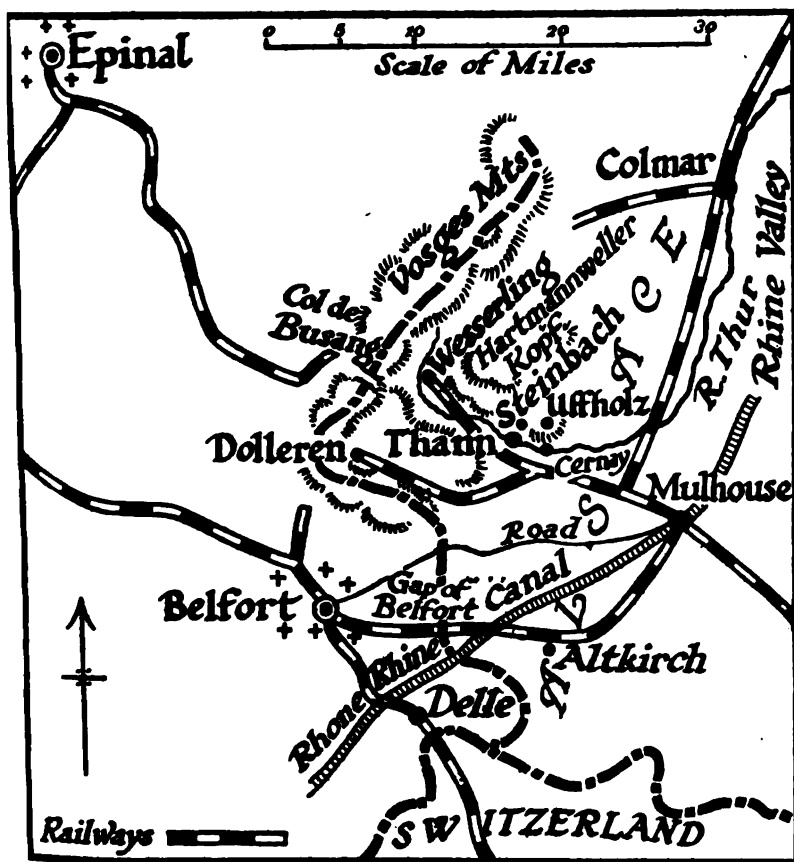
SITUATION IN ALSACE

In Upper Alsace the situation was practically unchanged since January 15th, when the French had fought their way along the wooded heights of the Vosges mountains to Steinbach, pushing back the German frontier guards to their stronghold at Uffholz, where they were entrenched in a formidable position on the southern slopes of the Vosges commanding the valley of the Thur and the approaches to Mulhouse. During December and January the French made the best way they could, considering the weather, through the wooded country north of the Thur, and we heard of daily fighting going on in the region of Hartmannweiler Kopf, the capture of which was an antecedent necessity before attacking the Uffholz position from the north. As pointed out in Chapter VI, it is important for the French to establish strong *points d'appui* on the forward slopes of the southern Vosges in view of future possibilities for an offensive campaign in Alsace.

GERMAN ATTACK ON YPRES

Higher up the battle front there was a sudden resumption of the offensive by the enemy on January 25th, when two very determined attacks were made, one of a specially violent nature on the British positions facing La Bassée, and the other on the French trenches east of Ypres. It was suggested at the time that these were premeditated attacks made by the local generals

with the intention of presenting their Emperor with a birthday present in the shape of some substantial gains of ground in localities where such gains would have been productive of valuable strategical results. The motive of the attacks matters not for the purposes of this narrative, which is only concerned



with the operations as they occurred, and with their tactical consequences.

The Germans had made strenuous efforts and heavy sacrifices to get possession of Ypres ever since Sir Douglas Haig occupied it with the 1st British Army Corps in October 1914. The place owes its importance to its central position in the

western corner of Flanders between the Lys river and the North Sea, blocking, as it does, the highway to Calais, and preventing access to the French frontier. The town is situated at the southern extremity of the Yser Canal, and had the Germans succeeded in capturing it, the position of the Allies on the Yser river would have been turned, and the roads to Dunkirk and Calais uncovered. Sir John French realised this from the first, and instructed the corps commander to defend the town by means of a semi-circle of infantry trenches, and artillery gun-pits, which formed a fortified enclave pushed out to the east, and rendered so strong by the skilful adaptation of the trenches to the ground, one trench enfilading the other, that the Ypres position, though by no means an ideal one, was one of considerable tactical strength, even when attacked by a much superior force to that of the defenders.

When a redistribution of the Allied Forces was made towards the end of November 1914, the 1st British Corps was temporarily withdrawn from the Ypres defences, which were handed over to French troops, who were scarcely ever molested till January 25th, when the attack mentioned above was delivered. What occurred was this. A German brigade, six battalions strong, was concentrated overnight in the trenches facing the French position, and at dawn advanced to attack the French in the usual mass formation, the battalions being formed in close column of companies, each company following on the heels of the one in front, the men marching shoulder to shoulder with the officers pushing them on from behind. The leading battalion went straight for the French position, and endeavoured to carry it by sheer weight of force. The attempt was a complete failure, for before the head of the column reached the first line of trenches it was brought to a standstill by an overwhelming frontal and enfilade fire, the unfortunate Germans being mowed down like ninepins. When the next supporting battalion tried to debouch from the trenches it was attacked by the French artillery, and driven back to cover, leaving the leading battalion nothing to do except to retire, which it did after leaving 300 dead bodies in front of the French trenches which it never reached.

GERMAN ATTACK ON GIVENCHY

The attack on the British position before La Bassée on the same day was a much more serious affair. It will be remembered that when General Smith-Dorrien, at that time commanding the 2nd Army Corps, arrived on the Lys river on October 11th,

he tried to push his way up the right bank to Lille, but found the Germans had anticipated his movement by throwing an Army Corps into the town, and seizing La Bassée, a station on the Bethune-Lille railway, where they dug themselves into a very strong position on some rising ground north of the town.¹ The General did his best to turn the Germans out of La Bassée, both by direct attack and by manœuvring round their right, but after ten days' hard marching and fighting he was obliged to give up the attempt, and on October 22nd drew his troops (3rd and 5th Divisions) back to the line Cuinchy-Givenchy-Fauquissart, which has been held by various reliefs of British troops ever since.

La Bassée is an important strategical point, but not nearly so important, either to the enemy or to the Allies, as Bethune, which is situated at the junction of two railways leading from Amiens up to the Belgian frontier, the one line running through Arras and Lens, and the other through Doullens and St. Pol. The first of these two lines is unavailable for the Allies, as the Germans have cut it at Lens, which has been in the enemy's occupation since the second week in October; but the second line is the chief one in use for bringing up reinforcements and supplies from the interior of France to the Allies' positions north of the Lys river. It was imperative for the Allies to hold on to Bethune, and equally imperative for the Germans to take it if they could. By driving our troops back from Bethune they would threaten the British communications with Boulogne, and the French communications with Calais. The Germans were fully aware of this, and in the early months of the war they made frantic efforts to hack their way through the British lines at this point, but always with the same result of failure.

On January 25th a carefully prepared attack was delivered against the troops of the 1st Division who were holding the British trenches facing La Bassée. In order to divert attention from the real attack a demonstration was made at dawn towards Neuve Chapelle, this being followed up by an advance from La Bassée on both sides of the Aire-La Bassée Canal. What took place has been well described by "Eye-Witness," who had access to all reports which reached Sir John French's headquarters, the following being an extract from the report which he sent to the Press Bureau in London two days after the battle took place—

¹ "The position of La Bassée has throughout defied all attempts at capture either by the French or British."—*Dispatch of Field-Marshal Sir John French, G.C.B., etc., dated 30th November, 1914.*

"On Monday, the 25th, the comparative quiet of the past few days was broken by a sudden assumption of the offensive on the part of the enemy. Early in the morning the German artillery opened a heavy fire upon the right of our line, and the area behind it. This bombardment was evidently the prelude to an attack in force, and our guns replied by shelling La Bassée and the railway triangle. At 8 a.m. the Germans launched an assault against the British and French on the south of the canal, and at one point penetrated our line. About the same time they also attacked heavily our troops in Givenchy, north of the canal, and passing over our front trenches temporarily gained a foothold in the place. But as their infantry surged forward through the village our men met them with cold steel, killing 100 with the bayonet. Fighting then proceeded for some hours at close quarters, but by noon we had re-occupied the whole of our original trenches round the village. The Germans showed the utmost determination in this quarter, delivering no less than five attacks on the north-east corner of Givenchy. In these their losses were very heavy, several scattered bodies which had succeeded in penetrating our line being killed practically to a man. Our casualties in this part of the fight were comparatively light.

"Meanwhile, on the south of the canal the struggle was fiercely contested throughout the day. The Germans, advancing along the main road, were caught by the fire of our machine-guns, and left the ground littered with dead bodies to the estimated number of 800, and as they came along the railway embankment they were also subjected to machine-gun fire, and suffered greatly; but, as has been said, they managed to penetrate our line at one point. By a counter-attack, however, undertaken about 1 p.m., in conjunction with the French, the Allies drove them back, and though we did not win back our original position, we established ourselves in a fresh line close behind it.¹ The total casualties of the Germans are reported to have amounted to considerably over 1000 in their effort against our line."

These two attacks have been noticed in detail, not so much on account of their intrinsic importance, as because they are

¹ German attacks were renewed against the Cuinchy position south of the canal on the 29th January and 1st February, with the result that not only did the British regain all the ground lost on the 25th, but captured some of the German first line trenches on the embankment of the canal, and on the ground adjoining it.

typical of German tactical methods as we have seen them applied during the present war in both the western and eastern campaigns. The plan is to prepare the way by artillery bombardment, and then, when the guns are thought to have done their work, send forward the infantry columns in dense masses of men with orders to hack a path through their opponents, regardless of all considerations except that only of overwhelming the enemy by the sheer force of superior weight. This is a complete departure from Moltke's tactics in 1870-71, when most of his time in the early phases of the war was occupied in checking the tendency of his subordinate generals to waste the lives of their men in order to gain success for themselves. After the successful Battle of Saarbrücken General Steinmetz was relieved of the command of the 4th German Army on account of the reckless way in which he sent battalion after battalion against the heights occupied by the French previous to attempting a turning movement. Subsequently a Cabinet Order was published forbidding German infantry to advance in close formation within 2000 yards of the enemy's position. Present-day German tactics are as retrograde as they are senseless, and are just wasting away the strength of the German Army without leaving anything to show for the appalling sacrifice of life which is being daily incurred.

Except for the reason suggested it is difficult to account for the meaningless recrudescence of the offensive on January 25th, undertaken without either co-operative effort or considered strategical purpose. Seeing how strong the local defences of Ypres and Bethune had been made, their capture would only be possible after the deployment of a large force of some four or five corps. To attempt the task with a couple of brigades was to court deserved defeat. The French official estimate of the German butcher's bill on January 25th was 25,000 killed and wounded soldiers—a ghastly birthday offering from the Generals to their War Lord. Spasmodic attacks of this kind are nothing more than counsels of despair. Their plans of conquest have hopelessly failed, and the German General Staff have nothing to substitute for them. The Nemesis of defeat forever dogs their steps. With the increased power gained by the defence it is possible for the Germans to retain hold of the territory which they have invaded till attrition has done its gruesome work in their already attenuated ranks, but negative strategy is of no use for purposes of conquest. Sooner or later retreat is inevitable, and for the sake of Germany's future the sooner it comes the better, for the longer her armies remain on

foreign territory the bigger the price which she will have to pay for peace.

For the German Emperor the prospect is indeed forlorn, for his sin has found him out. *Sequitur superbos ultor à tergo Deus.* He seized Belgium to attack France, and to leave it is to confess the crime which he committed. The hollowness of his plea of self-defence would then be exposed to the whole world. However this may be, the Emperor has got to face the fact that until he has purged his offence, and restored to its rightful owners the country which his armies have so ruthlessly devastated, any talk of peace, or even of peace negotiations, is but as sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal.

AUSTRIAN INVASION OF GALICIA

In the middle of January, as seen in the preceding chapter, it really looked as though the Russians were about to get rid of the invaders, and carry the war into the enemy's country. In Central Poland General Mackensen's repeated attempts to break through the Russian lines facing the Bzura and Rawka rivers had all failed, and the lull which followed the fighting led to the belief that he was waiting his opportunity to retire from a position which appeared to be daily growing more untenable. Lower down the battle front along the Nida river there was a similar lull, neither side showing any disposition to resume the offensive. In Western Galicia the Austrians held the line of the Dunajec all the way down its left bank, while the Russians were watching them from their entrenchments on the east side of the river. Between the Dunajec and the Roumanian frontier the whole of Galicia and the Bukovina was in Russian hands, and Russian troops held all the passes over the Carpathian mountains. A considerable Russian Army had penetrated to the Hungarian frontier of the Bukovina with the intention, as was supposed, of linking up with the armies of Roumania as soon as the Government of that country decided to take the field. On the right bank of the lower Vistula Russian cavalry spreading all over the northern territory of Poland had pushed detachments close up to the frontiers of West and East Prussia, while on the extreme right flank Russian troops had been once more set in motion, and were moving westwards both north and south of the Masurian lakes. Every one thought the tide had at last turned in favour of our Allies, who were beginning to start on their journey to Berlin.

Then occurred another of those dramatic transformation

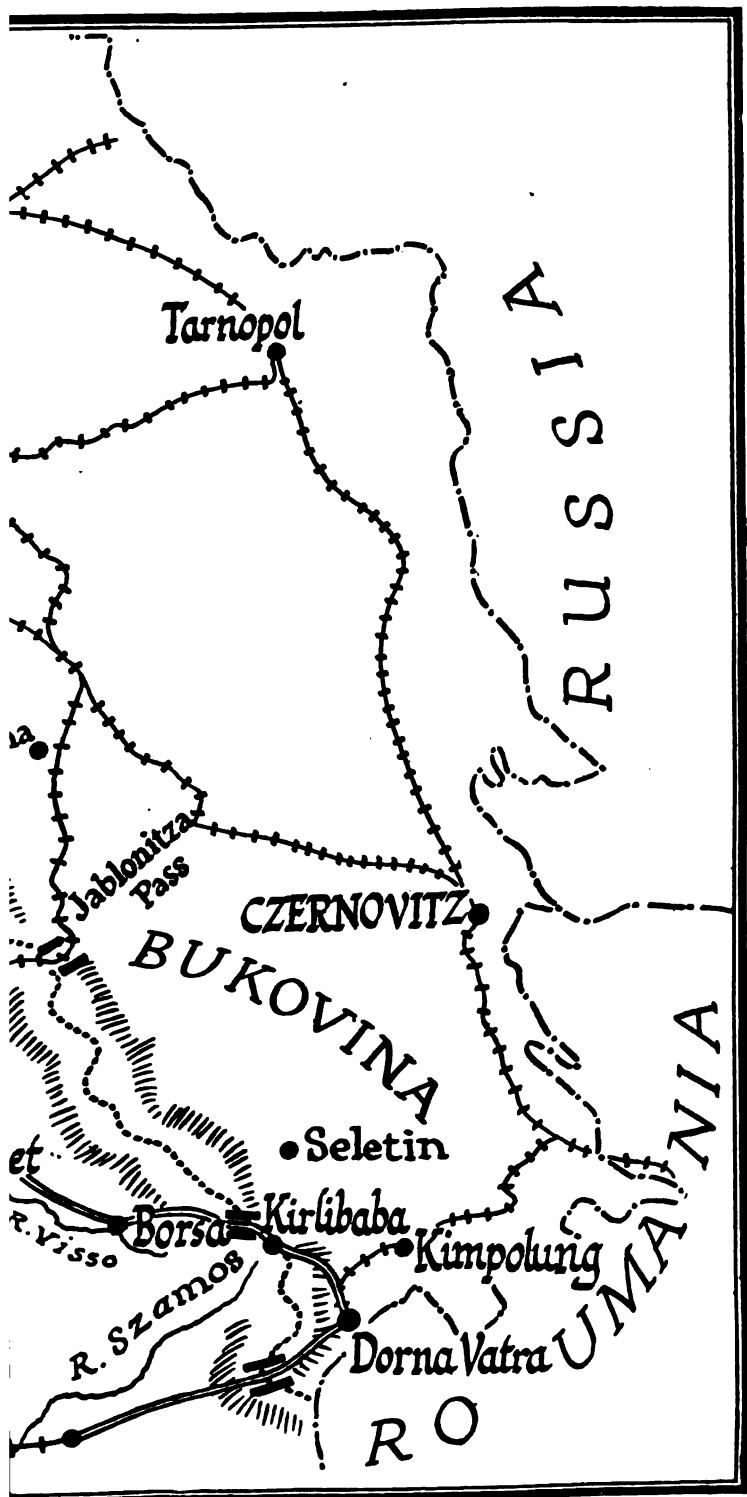
scenes which we have witnessed so often during this wonderful war of nations, and which once more set back the hands of the Russian clock. In no way disheartened by failure, Marshal Hindenburg determined to make fresh efforts with fresh plans. A large Austro-Hungarian Army, reported to be 400,000 strong, was concentrated in Hungary ostensibly for the purpose of invading Serbia, but really with the intention of re-conquering Galicia. Since Count Berchtold's downfall the influence of Count Tisza has been predominant in Vienna, and after the Count's interview with the German Emperor at main headquarters it was arranged that as many German corps as could be spared should be sent into Hungary to assist in repelling the threatened Russian invasion. Four or five corps, scraped together from various sources, composed partly of Bavarian, Saxon, and West Prussian troops, and including a brigade of Prussian Guards, were hurried to the Danube, and thence sent to reinforce the Austro-Hungarian Army, which was being concentrated on the Theiss river. Leavened with German troops, this army was then divided into three main groups, the right group being intended to advance into the Bukovina, the left to effect the relief of Przemyśl; and the central group, which was the strongest, and which was composed largely of German troops, having for its object to pierce the centre of the Russian line of resistance, and reoccupy Lemberg. The plan of campaign for giving effect to these intentions was carefully worked out by the German General Staff, the execution being entrusted to Hindenburg, who was acting as generalissimo for the Austro-German Armies in the Eastern theatre of war, and owing to the secrecy with which it was launched the initial conditions favoured its success.

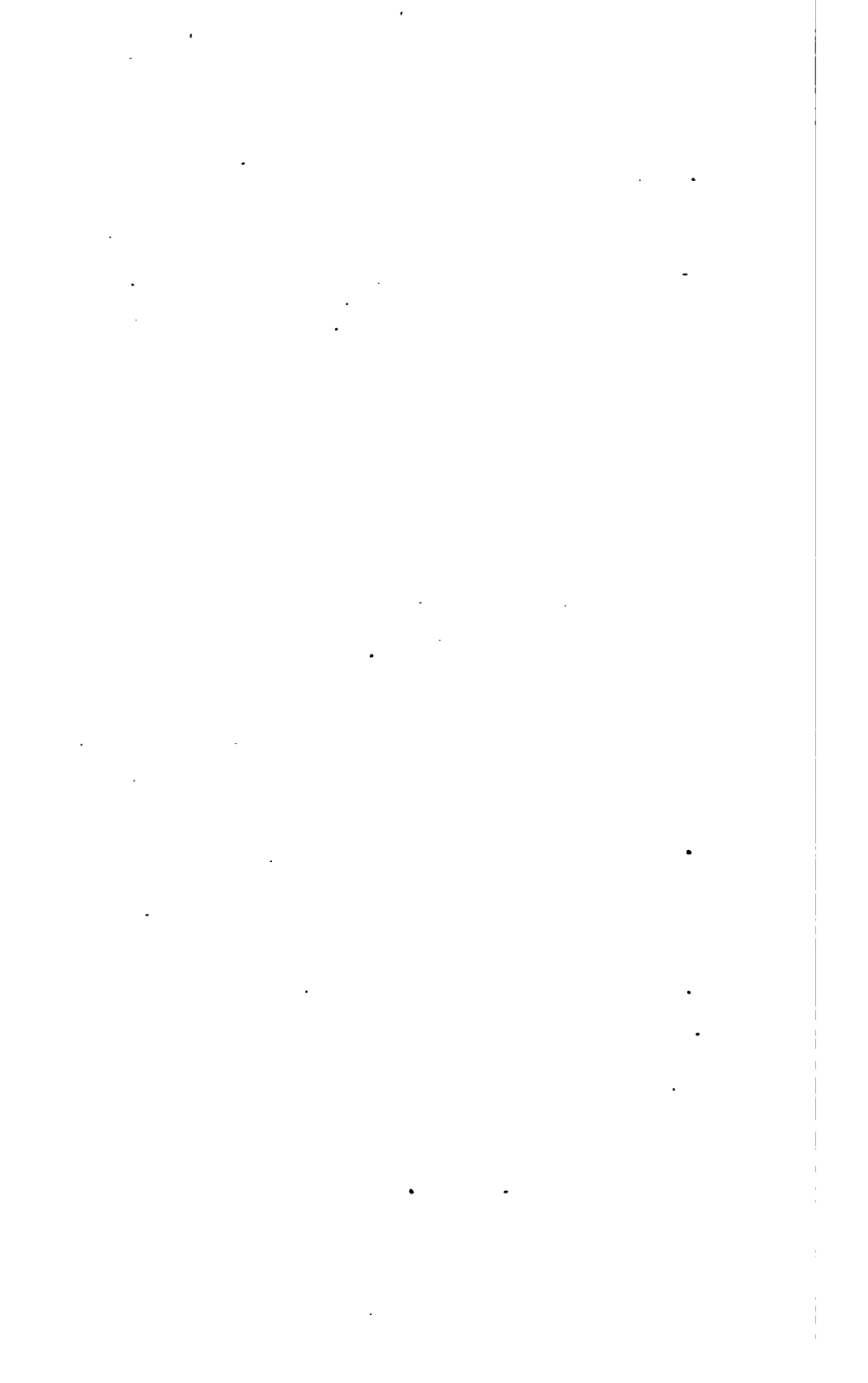
The first news of this new movement was conveyed in a Petrograd *communiqué* issued on January 22nd, which reported the presence of large bodies of Austrian troops on the River Szamos, south-west of the Kirlibaba and Dorna Vatra passes. On the following day the Grand Duke Nicholas reported that the Austrians had taken the offensive in the region of Kirlibaba, and we subsequently heard, not from Petrograd, but from Vienna, that Austrian troops had recaptured the Kirlibaba Pass, and were advancing into the interior of the Bukovina with the Russians retreating before them. The advance was not very rapid, for on January 27th the Grand Duke reported that an artillery combat was going on near Kimpolung, but none the less the Russians continued to retreat, disputing the road to the Austrians with their rearguards, but not attempting to

stand for a pitched battle. The Austrians occupied Seletin February 8th, Radautz on the 18th, and reached the line the Sereth river on the 15th, their objective being Czernowitza which was occupied by the enemy on the 17th.

Simultaneously with this movement into the Bukovina left column of the Austro-German Army, advancing along a sixty-mile front extending from the west of Kassa to Ungvár and making use of the three railways, which converge on the Galician frontier in this locality, pushed its way through the Dukla, Lupkow, and Uszok Passes, the Russians according to their wont falling back before the Austrian advance to prepared positions behind the crest of the mountains. On January 26th and 27th the Russians turned on the invaders and after a hotly contested running fight compelled the Austrians to fall back through the Dukla and Lupkow Passes to positions which they had in their turn fortified in case of retreat near Mezo Laborez, where a seven days' battle was fought, ending with the Austrians being driven out of their entrenchments with the loss of 170 officers, 10,000 men, and a quantity of guns and war material. The Russians were then eight miles or so south of the Galician frontier, in this locality, but the enemy still held positions north of the Uszok Pass, though their advance was held up by the Russians opposing them. Meanwhile the garrison of Przemyśl reported to be *in extremis*.

The central column, composed, as has been seen, chiefly of German troops, deployed at the end of January on a point east of Munkacs, when the left wing and centre crossed the mountains by the Wyzkow and Beskid Passes, using also the Tucholka Pass, which is situated a few miles west of the Beskid Pass. At the same time the right wing of this central column went through the Jablonitza Pass *en route* for Nadworna. On the left the Russians retired to a strongly entrenched position on the heights round Kosziowa, north of the Tucholka Pass where a violent battle took place on February 9th and 10th in which the Germans made no less than twenty-two attacks on the Russian trenches, but without succeeding in capturing them. When in the fury of the attack a trench was temporarily taken, a counter-attack with the bayonet, which is the Russian soldier's favourite weapon, was immediately successful in recovering the lost ground. The losses of the Germans on February 10th were reported to have been very heavy notwithstanding their defeat, they entrenched themselves up to the Russian trenches, and continued their attacks, t





without any success. The right wing of this central column did better, and after occupying Nadworna on February 14th linked up with the right column moving on Czernowitz.

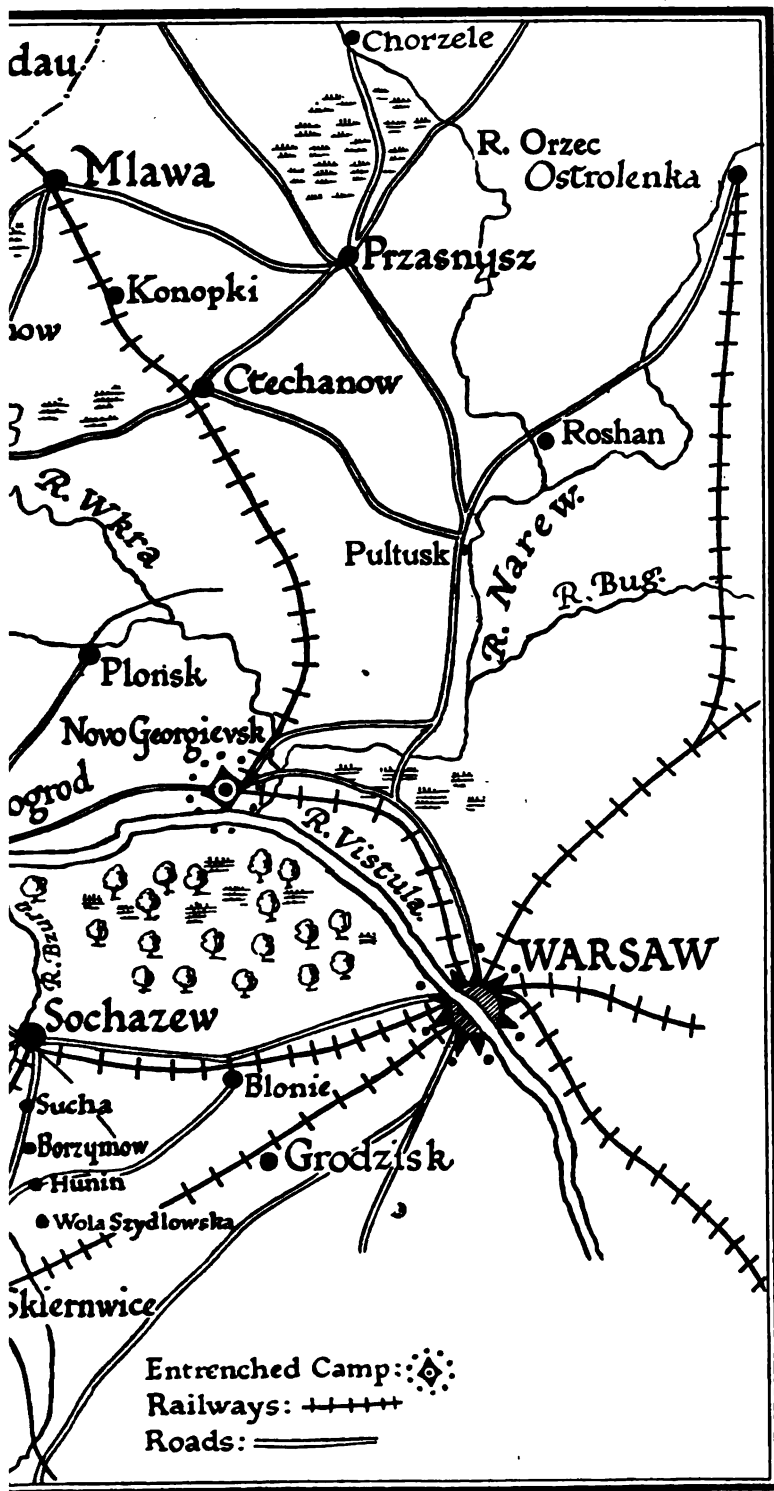
This invasion of Galicia was made with a large force acting on a concerted plan of campaign. Every pass over the Carpathians had been brought into use, and every railway leading from the interior of Hungary had been made available for bringing up troops and supplies. Although the movement took place along a front extending for more than 200 miles from the Dukla to the Kirlibaba Passes the three main columns kept touch of one another throughout the advance. The conception of the undertaking was doubtless due to the brain of General Falkenhayn, but the executive direction was also in good hands, for there was no hitch in the strategical arrangements which led to the deployment of a force amounting to something like 600,000 men along this very extended front. Strategy did its work for the enemy, and did it well, leaving the issue to depend on tactical results, which so far have turned out favourably for the Russians whenever they have come into contact with their adversaries. Stolid, stubborn, enduring, the Russian soldier is never seen at his best till he is standing on the defence, when full scope is given to his virile fighting qualities. Then he is hard to beat, as we have seen during the course of the war. In attack he has been less successful, not from shortcomings on his own part, but because of the difficult conditions under which he has to fight with scanty communications available for the Russian staff to keep the men supplied with ammunition, of which the expenditure is so enormous with modern quick-firing weapons.

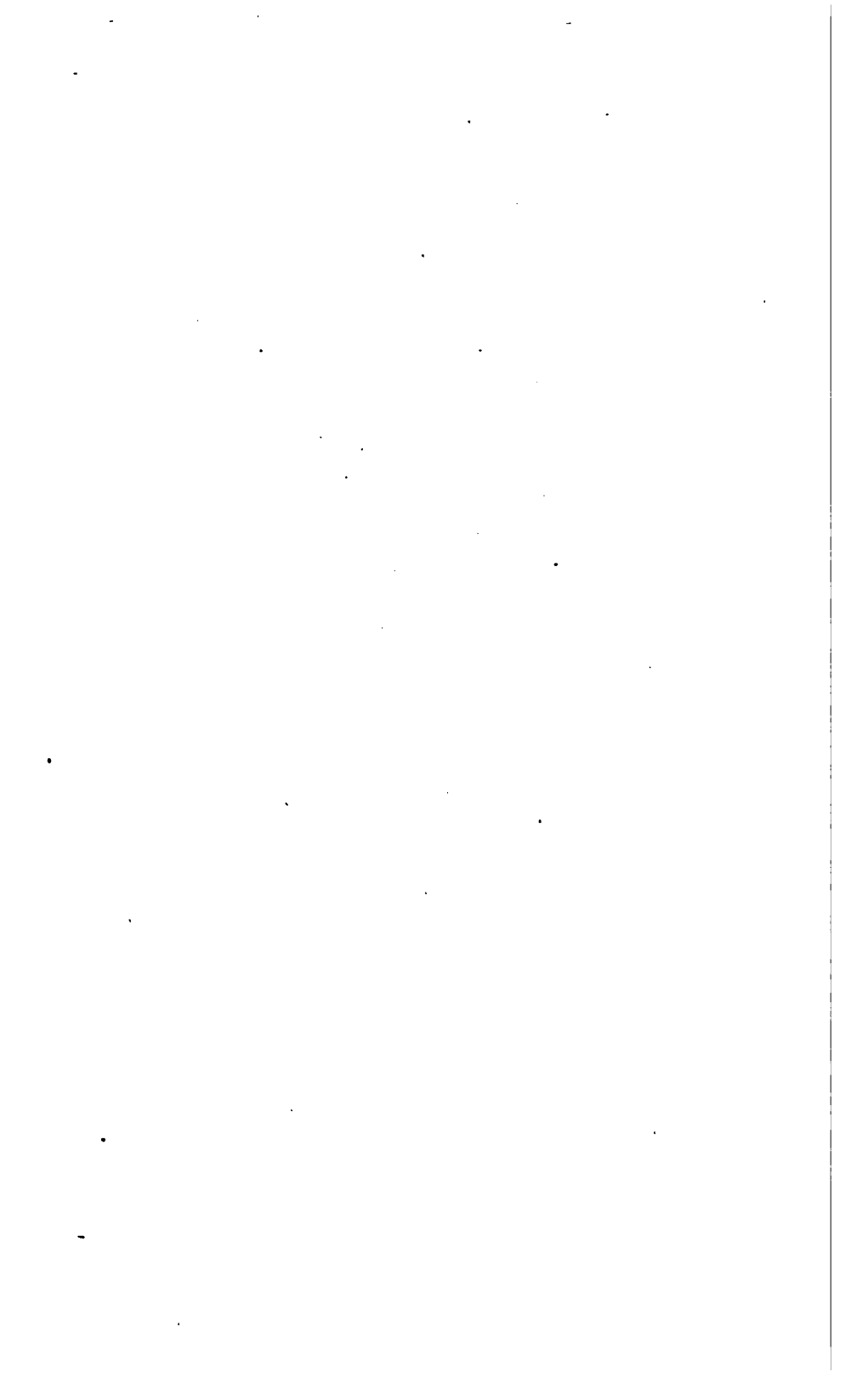
In order to prevent troops from being detached from Central Poland while the invasion of Galicia was in progress, General Mackensen was instructed to make another determined attempt to break through to Warsaw, no matter how great the cost might be. Owing to the difficulty (see map in Chapter VII) in making way across the Bzura river north of Sochazew, where the country between the river and Warsaw alternates between dense forests and impassable marshes, the German commander abandoned further effort in this direction, and, after leaving enough troops to hold on to the German trenches on the left bank, he moved the bulk of his force down to the Rawka river, and then crossed over to the right bank for the purpose of attacking the Russians who were very strongly entrenched on the line Sucha-Borzymow-Humin-Wola Szydłowska, some three or four miles east of the river bed. Finding

the Russian position strong, and the defence well-organised. Mackensen sent back for reinforcements, and by the end of January he had concentrated as many as seven divisions, a hundred batteries (600 guns), on a front of not more than ten miles. Then began one of those long and sanguinary battles of which we have already seen so many in the eastern theatre of war, lasting from the 29th of January to the 5th of February. One of the most determined of all the German attacks now made on the 31st January, when as many as twenty regiments (60 battalions) were sent against the Russian lines at Hum, with results which are described in the following words by M. Ksiunin, the war correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya*, was an eye-witness of the battle on that day—

"The preparations for the attack began at 9 a.m., and 6-inch, 8-inch, and 11-inch guns opened a terrific bombardment. The object of the enemy was to break through at Hum, which the Germans regard as the key to the position. The actual assault began at 11 a.m., the enemy advancing in lines, when their densely packed columns were met by artillery and rifle fire, and the first rows fell. The forward units, breaking into the trenches, begged quarter, while the rear behind charged us. We bayoneted all within reach. Behind our demolished embrasures new ones were formed of piled-up bodies of German soldiers. Thus the engagement continued till 1 p.m. Between 1 and 2 p.m. German reinforcements poured in on us, and more bayonet work followed, while shrapnel wrought great havoc. The hostile columns, partially stricken, surged backwards, but a machine-gun in their rear drove them forward, and they desperately sought to penetrate our lines in front and on the flanks. We then received reinforcements, and the men, without firing a shot, charged with the bayonet, and the hand-to-hand fighting with cold steel lasted till 6 p.m. All in the foremost ranks of the Germans were annihilated, and, save a handful of wounded, not a single man of those who broke into our trenches returned alive."

Other attacks on succeeding days met with a similar fate, and so great was the slaughter in this seven-days' battle that the German loss in killed and wounded is reported to have amounted to 50,000, an estimate which it is quite conceivable was not exaggerated. The Russian loss was comparatively light, and until forced to make an occasional counter-attack the Russians waited in their trenches for the enemy, who always came on





massed, shoulder to shoulder, columns, this being the only way to get the German soldiers to face the death which awaited them in front.

Ever since the last battle of the Rawka river Mackensen has been quiescent, and interest is now being diverted from Central Poland to the East Prussian frontier, where operations on a large scale are rapidly developing.

Early in January, as has already been seen, a Russian army of unknown strength, and accompanied by a large force of cavalry, began to move up the right bank of the lower Vistula, advancing at first between the Skwra and Wkra rivers, and then gradually extending its front east and west towards the frontier of West and East Prussia. The advance was slow, as the roadways were blocked with snow, while off the roads the country was cut up by marshes and numberless small tributary streams, which feed the two rivers on their way down to the Vistula, but no opposition was encountered till within some twenty miles of the Russian frontier, when the Russian cavalry came up against detachments of German troops, who were watching the approaches to the frontier from the south. Successful actions took place at Sierpe, Bejun, Radzanow, and Konopki, the German troops falling back before the Russians, who pushed their cavalry patrols close up to Lipno, which is only eighteen miles from Thorn, and to Chorzele, about ten miles north of Prasnysz. Simultaneously with this movement, which appears to have been more of the nature of a reconnaissance in force than of an offensive movement undertaken with the purpose of crossing the Prussian frontier, the 10th Russian Army, which had been marking time for three months in its positions east of the Masurian lakes, began to show signs of taking the offensive and carrying the war into the interior of East Prussia.

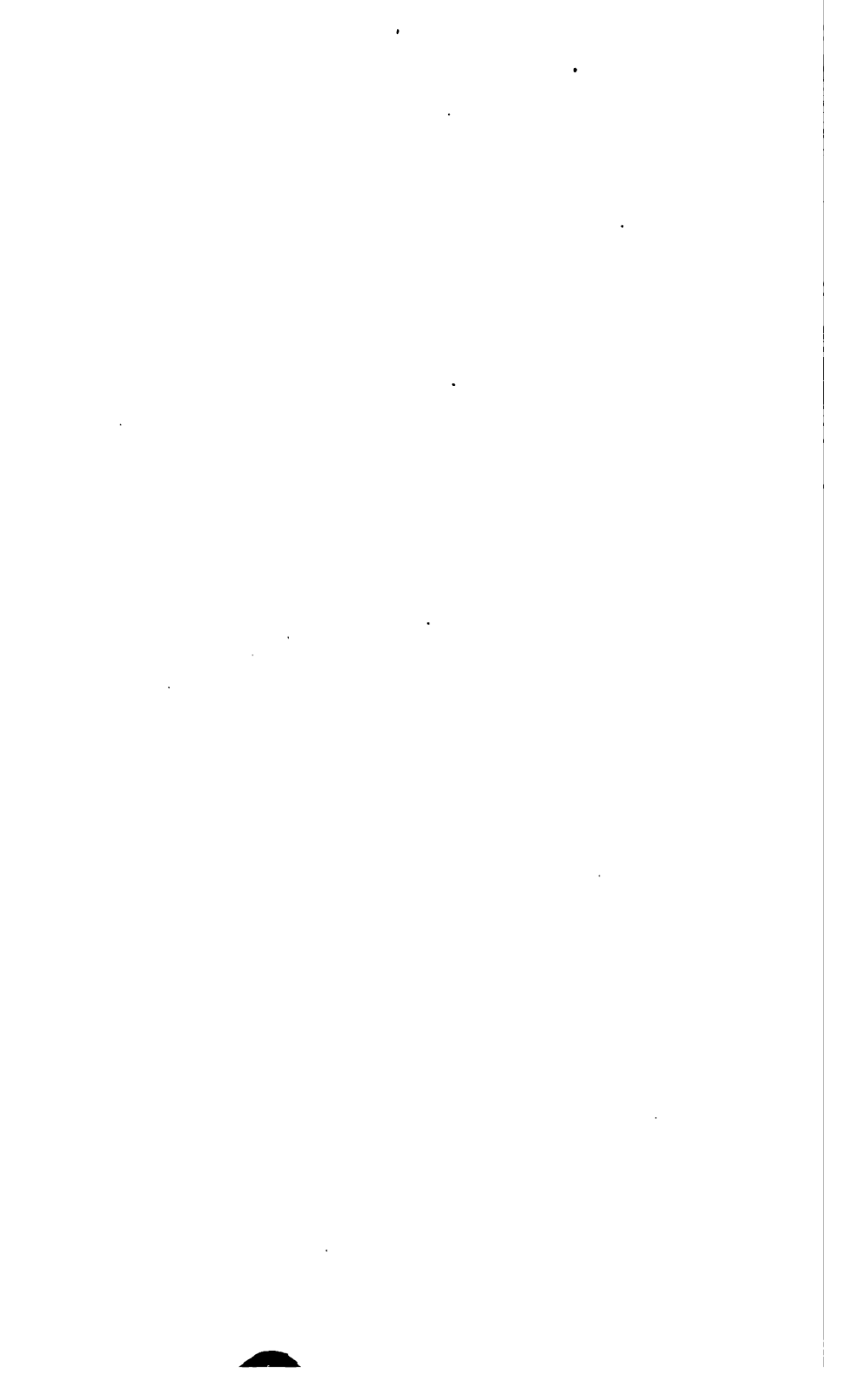
This army was occupying a position some twenty miles or so inside the frontier of East Prussia, extending along a ninety-mile front from the region of Gumbinnen to Johannisburg. On the right General Bulgakoff with the 20th Corps was holding the line of the Angerap river from a point north of Gumbinnen down to the Masurian lakes, from where the line was prolonged, but not quite continuously, to Lyck. This town formed the centre of the Russian position, the left extending south of the lakes along the Pissa river to Johannisburg. On the extreme Russian right a detached force, based on the fortress of Kovno, was threatening Tilsit with the intention, after clearing the enemy out of the northern corner of East Prussia, of then

moving on Königsberg in conjunction with General Bulgakoff's Corps, while the main Russian Army was to advance into the heart of the province along the routes south of the lake district.

After launching his Carpathian campaign, Hindenburg took up his headquarters at Insterburg, and with the help of the railways at his disposal collected a force of some ten corps, six of which were new formations brought up from Posen and West Prussia, which he assembled on a line facing the Russian Army. Tremendous efforts were made to get this army ready to invade Poland, and though the majority of the men were young conscripts, untried in war, by the end of the first week in February their organisation was complete, and the equipment all that could be desired.

What then took place was this: On the 7th February Hindenburg set his troops in motion and attacked the Russians all along their line. The detached force near Tilsit was defeated at Schovellen, driven across the frontier, and pursued up to the banks of the Niemen, when it took refuge under the guns of Kovno. On the same day, dividing his army into three columns (northern, central, southern), the Marshal directed General Eichhorn, commanding the northern column, to cross the Angerap river, attack the 20th Russian Corps, and, after driving it back, move on Suwalki, with the intention of enveloping the entire right wing of the Russian Army. General Falck, commanding the southern column, was directed on the same day to cross the Pissa river, seize Johannsburg, and make his way with all speed to Augustovo. While these flanking movements were materialising, General Bülow was ordered to attack the Russian centre at Lyck, and drive the Russians back on the troops who were undertaking the enveloping operation. The plan was well conceived, and partially succeeded. Taken by surprise, and attacked by at least two German Corps, General Bulgakoff found himself isolated from the Russian Army on his left, and suffered a heavy defeat. Falling back rapidly towards Suwalki, the 20th Corps was there surrounded, and after fighting for two days on four fronts, broke up into detachments, some few of which forced their way through the German lines into the forest of Augustovo, while the remaining men of the corps were either killed or taken prisoners. General Bülow was not so successful, for though he turned the Russians out of Lyck, they fell back in good order to the Niemen and Bobr rivers, where they speedily rallied, received reinforcements, and began a series of counter-attacks, which ended in throwing the Germans back towards their frontier.





Thwarted on the Niemen, Hindenburg then attempted to strike at Warsaw by sending an expeditionary army down the Narew river. Leaving only a containing force, under General Eichhorn, to face the Russians on the front Simno-Augustovo, he diverted the bulk of his available troops to the line Willenburg-Soldau, and before the concentration was complete sent three corps rapidly across the frontiers with orders to seize Przasnysz, a great road centre, and link up with a German Army, which had been moving slowly for some weeks past up the right bank of the lower Vistula. Przasnysz was captured on February 25th, but the German success was only short-lived, for the Russian position on the Narew happens to be stronger than anywhere else in Poland, on account of the three railway lines, which converge on Ostrolenka, and which enabled the Grand Duke Nicholas on this occasion to deploy a superior force on the right bank of the river to oppose the Germans at Przasnysz before reinforcements could reach them from Willenburg. After a two-days' battle Przasnysz was recaptured on February 27th, the Germans, who were caught between two fires and had a narrow escape from a *débâcle*, being driven back in disorder towards Mława and Chorzele. The battle of Przasnysz restored prestige to Russian arms, and came as an opportune set-off against the defeat of the 10th Russian Army earlier in the month.

Loth to admit defeat, Hindenburg brought up fresh reinforcements to Willenburg, and, dividing his troops into three columns, made another bid for Warsaw during the second week in March. One column was sent down the Omulew river, another down the Orzyec, and a third directed against Przasnysz; but the Russians were waiting for them, and attacked all three columns simultaneously before they could debouch from the marshes which lie between the frontier of East Prussia and the Narew river. The Germans were again checked and pushed back to within ten miles of their frontier.

As long as Hindenburg was served by his admirable system of Prussian railways he was master of the situation, and was able to deliver blow after blow with an impunity derived from his ability to concentrate troops at short notice, where they were most wanted for the moment. Directly he got away from his railways, and was dependent on motor and wheeled transport for supplies, his offensive movements began to show signs of paralysis, and eventually ended in an impasse. Then he transferred his energies to another part of the front, collected another army, made another rush,

and continued it till the Grand Duke had time to bring up fresh reinforcements from the Bug river base. *Toties quoties*. All this time the German Army was paying dearly for the Marshal's energy, which looked only at present opportunities and took no account for the morrow. Yet a time must surely come when Germany will want all her sons, who are left, for the defence of her own frontier, and when brilliant offensive strategy will have to make way for defensive measures to resist invasion.

The fall of Przemyśl, which occurred on March 22nd, was the turning-point in the Russian Carpathian campaign. So long as the fortress held out, its relief was a prize to fight for. When it surrendered, the ground was cut from under the feet of the Austro-Hungarian Army, which had been struggling for more than two months through snow and ice to reach the beleaguered fortress. Thenceforth further effort was meaningless, and the offensive spirit of the troops was correspondingly weakened. Przemyśl is a great entrenched camp and *place d'armes*, upon which the Delegations have spent large sums of money during the past twenty years. Through the favour of Field-Marshal Beck, who was then Austrian War Minister, the writer of this volume visited the place in the early 'nineties, and found it was even at that time a fortress of considerable strength, consisting of an inner and outer line of well-armed forts, the equipment of which has since been replaced by a modern armament. Great prestige was attached to this fortress by the Austrians, who believed it to be impregnable. Situated athwart the San river, it commands the main routes leading from Eastern to Western Galicia, and is on the direct line of railway communication between Cracow and Lemberg. The fall of the place completed the conquest of Galicia, and released the Russian Army of investment, which could not have been less than 200,000 men.

The siege was not creditable to the Austro-Hungarian Army. On March 22nd 126,000 prisoners, including nine generals and 2500 officers, surrendered to the Russians. Allowing for casualties during the siege, the original garrison must have exceeded 150,000 men, when one-third of that number would have sufficed for defensive purposes. After the defeat of the Austrian Army under General Auffenberg in September a large number of the beaten troops from Lemberg took refuge in the fortress, and instead of being ordered to join the Austrian Army in the field, they were allowed to remain in the town, thereby increasing the number of mouths to be fed, and hampering the

defence. A few days after the surrender, Przemyśl was visited by Mr. Stanley Washburn, special correspondent of *The Times*, who gave a deplorable account of the demoralisation of the garrison. The Austrian officers had helped themselves, but neglected their men, who were left to shift as best they could during the siege while the officers lived on the fat of the land. The following is the contemptible picture drawn by Mr. Washburn of the condition of the garrison after the surrender, and before the prisoners had been sent to Russia.

"I believe that the Austrians, especially the Hungarians, are first-class raw material, but they are utterly broken and helpless. This I consider to be due to their wretched officers, who have every appearance of being the most irresponsible and incompetent in Europe. I have never witnessed a more unpleasant sight than that of the dapper, over-dressed, and immaculate Austrian officers, laughing and chatting gaily as they were driven in carriages to the railway station for departure, passing through the columns of their own men, pale and haggard from hardships, which have apparently not been shared in any particular by their officers. The officers, who numerically seem to be about one in thirty, strike me as being parasites, contributing nothing whatever to the defence of the town. As an example of over-officering, it may be stated that General Kusmanek (the Austrian commandant) had seventy-five officers on his staff, while General Artamov, the Acting Russian Governor, has but four." ¹

All this is bad, and largely accounts for the collapse of the Austrian Army, which had to summon German troops to aid in the defence of its own frontier.

As soon as the surrender of Przemyśl had taken place, the bulk of the investing troops was forthwith sent to reinforce the Russian Army, which was threatening the invasion of Hungary across the Carpathian Mountains. All through March the Russians were standing on the defensive in Galicia waiting for reinforcements, the surrender of Przemyśl being the signal for the Grand Duke to order a rigorous offensive to be taken along the line Dukla-Lutovisk-Turka, where he had concentrated a powerful army which was destined to secure possession of the Central Carpathian Passes, and then descended into the Hungarian plain. The Russian right wing, advancing more rapidly than the centre and left, pushed the Austrians back

¹ *The Times*, April 3rd.

through the Dukla Pass, and reached the valley of the Ordava at Stropko during the first week in April, large captures of prisoners being made on the way. The advance down the Laborez river was slower, and very severe fighting took place round Meso Laborez for more than ten days, the Austrians trying hard to keep the Russians off the railway, which follows the river valley down to Homonna; but all their counter-attacks were repulsed, and the Lupkow Pass and upper Laborez river passed into Russian hands. Farther east, after dislodging the enemy from their fortified positions on the upper San river, the Russians fought their way slowly to the Rustoki Pass, and by the middle of April had secured the whole of the Carpathian crest, and summits of the southern slopes, from Regetow to Wolosate, but they still had some ground to cover before they could reach the valleys of the Ung and Latorcza rivers, and make use of the railways leading down those valleys to Ungvar and Munkacs. The Uszok, Tucholka, and Beskid Passes remained in possession of the enemy, whose troops in that direction had been recently reinforced both by Germans from East Prussia, and by Hungarians brought up from the Reserve Army concentrated at Tamesvar. The Germans were reported to have six corps on the line Orosz-Ruszk-Kosziowa with an equal number of Austrian Corps.

The position in mid-April was interesting. The Grand Duke Nicholas and Marshal Hindenburg had the same object in view—namely, to strike at each other's communications, and paralyse their respective offensive movements. The Russian Commander-in-Chief was striving to push down into the Hungarian plain, and by seizing Ungvar and Munkacs cut the Austro-German line of retreat to Budapest. His adversary, on the other hand, operating north of the Carpathian ridge, was endeavouring to make his way down the Stryj valley, so as to turn the left flank of the Russian Army advancing on the line shown in the sketch. Very large forces have been massed by both commanders in this direction, for they recognise that the battle now in progress must have decisive results on the future of the campaign. Elsewhere on the extended front the opposing forces were standing on the defensive awaiting the result of the struggle in the Carpathians, and there the matter must be left for another chapter.

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CHAPTER IX

THE DARDANELLES AND NEUVE CHAPELLE

February 19th to March 18th

1915

Naval attack on the Dardanelles forts—Causes of its failure—Necessity for military co-operation—Battle of Neuve Chapelle—Its strategical object—Indecisive tactical results—Causes of failure—Faulty leading—Want of artillery and infantry co-operation.

THE month of March, 1915, is memorable for two events of primary importance, which will be the subject of this chapter: the attempt of the British fleet to force a passage through the Straits of the Dardanelles, and the Battle of Neuve Chapelle.

NAVAL ATTACK ON THE DARDANELLES FORTS

The naval attack on the Dardanelles forts began on the 19th February when a British and French squadron, commanded respectively by Vice-Admiral Carden and Rear-Admiral Quépratte, bombarded the forts at the entrance to the Straits, but without completely silencing their fire. The bombardment was renewed on the 25th, when the four principal outer forts, Sedd-el-Bahr, Helles, Kum Kale, and Orkanieh, were destroyed. On the following day the mine-sweepers set to work, and cleared the minefield for a distance of four miles up the Straits. Then bad weather intervened, and operations were suspended till the 4th March, on which day the bombardment of the inner forts began, and was continued intermittently on the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 10th, while Admiral Carden was waiting for reinforcements. On the 18th March a joint Anglo-French attack was launched, the following being a *précis* narrative of what took place.

At 10.45 a.m. the three battleships, *Queen Elizabeth*, *Lord Nelson*, and *Agamemnon*, with the battle-cruiser *Inflexible*, mounting between them eight 15-inch, sixteen 12-inch, twenty 9.2-inch, and ten 6-inch guns, entered the Straits and engaged Forts J, L, and T, on the west side of the Narrows, and Forts U and V on the east side, while the battleship *Prince George*,

armed with four 12-inch and twelve 6-inch guns, and the *Triumph*, with four 10-inch and fourteen 7.5-inch guns, engaged Forts E, F, and H, which protect the Channel at Kephez Point about three miles before reaching the Narrows. How far these ships advanced into the Straits was not stated in Admiral de Robeck's report, but they did not get within decisive range of the forts which they attacked, for when the French Squadron, consisting of the four battleships *Suffren*, *Gaulois*, *Charlemagne*, and *Bouvet*, moved up the Straits soon after noon to engage the forts "at closer range," we were told that Forts J, U, F, and E "replied strongly," thus indicating that the first bombardment had not been very effective. Subsequently, however, the fire of the ten battleships inside the Straits silenced these forts, for according to the Admiral's report "all the forts had ceased firing" by 1.25 p.m.

Admiral de Robeck followed up this initial success by sending into the Straits the six battleships *Vengeance*, *Irresistible*, *Albion*, *Ocean*, *Swiftsure*, and *Majestic*, their combined armament being twenty 12-inch and four 10-inch guns, to relieve the six ships which had been engaged in the forenoon. Then *Fortune*, always fickle in war, deserted the Allied Fleets. The *Bouvet* was blown up by a mine north of Erenkeui village, sinking in less than three minutes with all hands on board, and later on the *Irresistible* at 4.9 p.m., and the *Ocean* at 6.5 p.m. also sank after being struck by mines, though happily their crews were saved. In spite of these casualties the remaining British ships continued in action till it was too dark to see their targets, when they withdrew, but without having completely subdued the fire of the shore batteries. Although the Admiral reported that he purposed continuing the operations, and stated that he had ample naval and military forces at his disposal, acting either on his own responsibility, or under superior orders, he subsequently abandoned his intention, for no attempt was made to renew the bombardment after the 18th March.

The ships never had a fair chance of accomplishing their purpose, for owing to the narrow waters in which they were operating, they were unable to get within decisive range of the forts without exposing themselves, not only to the risk of floating mines, but also to being attacked individually by the concentrated fire of the shore batteries. A battleship is a big target, and her only chance to avoid being hit is to keep in motion, as our ships did during the bombardment of Alexandria, when, after advancing to decisive range, they circled round

and round in front of the forts all the time they were firing. While the ships in the Dardanelles were bombarding the forts they in their turn were bombarded by mobile guns and heavy field howitzers from concealed positions outside the fixed batteries, and the damage done to them was for the most part due to these field pieces, which were moved about as circumstances required. The ships could keep out of effective range of the fixed forts, but they could not get away from the mobile howitzer batteries, which, favoured by the configuration of the ground on both sides of the Straits, were able to fire at the ships without the latter being able to fire at them. Herein lay the difficulty of the operation as long as it was confined to naval action, a difficulty which was increased by the danger from floating mines and from torpedo stations on shore. Admiral Hornby correctly understood the situation when he told the Admiralty in 1878 that before sending his ships into the Dardanelles it would be necessary to land a force in the Gulf of Xeros to seize the lines of Bulair, and subjugate the Gallipoli Peninsula.

No credence can be attached to the report of a German artillery officer who wrote an account of the battle on March 18th which was published in the *Cologne Gazette*, and reproduced in *The Times* of April 6th. He claims that the three lost battleships were sunk by the fire of the guns of Forts U and V, which are situated close to Chanak. According to his account, the fire of the forts was first concentrated on the *Bouvet*, and, when she was sunk, diverted to the *Irresistible*, and subsequently to the *Ocean*, causing them both to share the fate of the French battleship. The story is plausible, but untrue in the face of Admiral de Robeck's report, which stated that the three ships were sunk after striking floating mines.¹ If the fire of the forts had been as effective as this witness claims it to have been, the ships would not have been allowed to remain afloat till the crews had been taken off by torpedo boats. It is interesting to know from the German officer's report that the Dardanelles forts were manned by German gunners, and that the whole scheme of artillery and mine defence had been prepared under German direction.

Bombardment of fixed fortifications has never been regarded as the primary work of the Fleet, the function of which is not to destroy forts on land, but ships at sea. The operation

¹ "The losses of ships were caused by mines drifting with the current, which were encountered in areas hitherto swept clear, and this danger will require special treatment."

described above was only possible because the Allied Fleets had undisputed command of the sea. Had there been any risk of an attack by hostile ships it would have been necessary to have kept every round of ammunition until that risk was removed. As it was, the bombardment could go on uninterrupted till its object had been accomplished, the wastage in ammunition being made good from the naval base at Malta. Alone, however, the Fleet was powerless to accomplish the ultimate purpose for which the bombardment was undertaken. Its action was preparatory, and not decisive. Before our ships could advance into the open waters of the Marmora their communications would have to be secured behind them, and the banks on both sides of the narrow waterway through which their supplies will come cleared of the enemy's guns and troops. This is where the Army came in, and why it was necessary to exercise patience till the expeditionary force had begun its work.

BATTLE OF NEUVE CHAPELLE

The spring campaign was opened on the British side on the 10th March by an attack on what was known as the Neuve Chapelle *enclave*. When General Smith-Dorrien found his way to Lille in October 1914 barred by the Germans, who had established themselves in a fortified position at La Bassée, he withdrew the 2nd Corps to the line Givenchy-Neuve Chapelle-Fauquissart, where it linked up with the 3rd Corps under General Pulteney. On the 22nd October the British position extended in a practically straight line from Houplines on the Lys river to Givenchy on the La Bassée canal, but during the fighting at the end of October and beginning of November the Germans succeeded in capturing the village of Neuve Chapelle, and pushing the *enclave* into the British lines west of the village. Neuve Chapelle in German hands had always been a thorn in Sir John French's side as it intercepted the communications of the 1st Corps at Givenchy with the 3rd Corps at Armentières, and he accordingly decided to recapture the village, straighten out the British line, and push out a salient into the enemy's position.

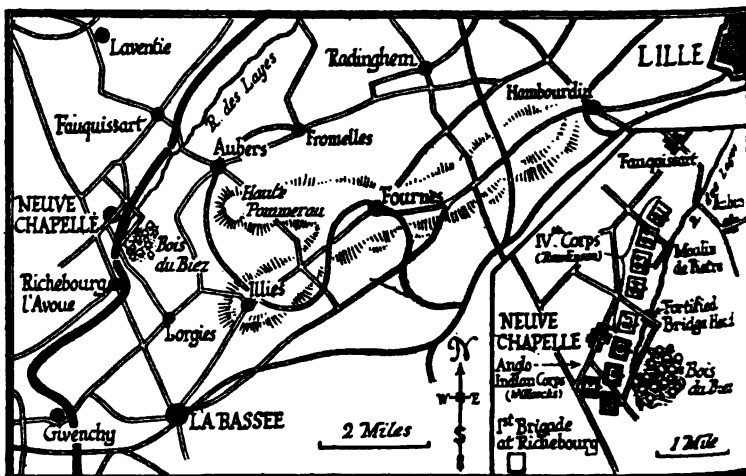
What took place was described in Sir John French's daily bulletins, and in his subsequent dispatch, which was dated April 5th, but not published in London till the 15th. The dispatch came none too soon to allay the public disquietude caused by the long casualty lists, which were daily received from the Front during the first fortnight in April, and which

seemed to be out of proportion to the results achieved. The report showed signs of having been carefully edited, and dealt principally with the three days' battle round Neuve Chapelle from March 10th to 18th. Besides clearing up many points which were left in doubt in the bulletins issued at the time of the battle, it disposed also of some idle rumours which were based on the evidence of wounded officers and men, who were only cognisant of facts which came under their immediate notice without having any knowledge of the course of the battle as a whole. Formerly, when battles were fought and won in a day, and when the operations were conducted under the direct hand, voice, and eye of the Commander-in-Chief, he was able to write his report from personal observation, and transmit it to the Government at home at the close of the battle. The Duke of Wellington's Waterloo dispatch was written from La Haye Sainte on the day following the battle, and Lord Wolseley wrote his report of the battle of Tel-el-Kebir on the evening after he had defeated Arabi Pasha. The circumstances of present-day battles do not admit of prompt reports being rendered, owing to the extent of ground which they cover, and the numbers of troops and subordinate commanders engaged. Before the Commander-in-Chief can write his dispatch he has to wait for the reports of his Generals, and these often require to be supplemented by further information, and sometimes explained in personal interviews. This takes time, but the delay should be as short, and the dispatch as full, as possible, having regard to military necessity as well as to the public interest.

Although Sir John French did not think it judicious to let the public into the secret of his intentions, it is clear from what he wrote in his dispatch, as well as from what he omitted, that when he ordered the attack on Neuve Chapelle he had ulterior views in mind beyond the capture of the village, which he only regarded as a stepping-off point for an advance on Lille. In Section 4 of his report the Field-Marshal pointed out that two miles south-west of Lille there was a marked ridge which runs, as shown in the accompanying sketch, to the village of Fournes, where it bifurcates into two spurs, one of which leads to a height known as Haut Pommereau, and the other to the village of Illies. The Field-Marshal referred to this ridge as the "main topographical feature of this part of the theatre," the reference clearly indicating his intentions when he sent his secret memorandum to Sir Douglas Haig on February 19th. He wished to gain possession of this ridge in

order to reach Lille. That he failed to achieve his full purpose was not due to faulty instructions, or to incomplete preparations, but to certain causes which the Field-Marshal said were preventable, and which destroyed the hope of success almost before the battle began.

The salient facts of the three days' fighting (March 10th to 12th) as recorded by Sir John French are as follows: The battle opened at 7.30 a.m. on the 10th with a powerful bombardment by a large force of massed batteries of the German trenches



protecting the village of Neuve Chapelle, the bombardment being wholly successful ¹ in destroying the trenches except on

¹ The "Eye Witness" who was attached to Sir John French's headquarters supplemented the Field-Marshal's reports of the battle with a detailed narrative, which he compiled from the first-hand evidence of staff and regimental officers who were engaged in the fighting.

"At 7.30 a.m., on the 10th," writes "Eye Witness," "the battle began with a bombardment by a large number of guns and howitzers. Our men in the trenches describe this fire as being the most tremendous both in point of noise and in actual effect they had ever seen or heard. The shrieking of the shells in the air, their explosions, and the continuous thunder of the batteries were all merged into one great volume of sound. The discharges of the guns were so rapid that they sounded like the fire of a gigantic machine-gun. Many other reports have come along corroborating the above statement. "Whether we had the advantage in the number of men," wrote an officer to his mother, "I cannot say, but we certainly had in guns of all calibre. You never heard such a din in all your life. The farmhouses vibrated all day long, and during the first half-hour of the bombardment there were some 17,000 shells screaming towards the Boches." A Prussian officer who was

the extreme north of the point of attack, where the guns failed to reach some of the wire entanglements. The 28rd and 25th Brigades of the 8th Division (4th Army Corps), along with the Garhwal Brigade of the Anglo-Indian Corps, then assaulted the trenches, and though the 28rd Brigade was temporarily held up by the undemolished wire entanglements mentioned above, the whole of the village and entrenchments protecting it were in British possession by 11 a.m. So far so good; but then occurred a delay of four and a half hours, due partly to the disorganisation of the infantry after their successful charge, but chiefly to the failure of the General Officer commanding the 4th Corps to send on his Reserve Brigades (21st, 22nd, and 24th) to follow up the initial success gained by the capture of Neuve Chapelle. Instead of following hard on the heels of the leading Brigades, the Reserve Brigades did not arrive till 3.30 p.m., and then the chance of reaching the ridgeway at Fournes had gone. The Germans were given time to rally and bring up reinforcements of men who had not been shaken by the artillery bombardment, and who entered fresh into the battle. The 4th Corps was directed to occupy the village of Aubers, and the Anglo-Indian Corps the Bois du Biez, but no progress could be made beyond the river des Layes, which constitutes the German line of defence east of Neuve Chapelle. The Germans held a strong entrenched position 600 yards north-west of Pietre Mill, and they also had a fortified bridge-head over the river north-west of the Bois du Biez. Sir Douglas Haig ordered up three battalions of the 1st Brigade from Givenchy to Richebourg, but it was too late. Darkness came on, and the troops had to stay where they were, as shown in the sketch.

On the following day (March 11th) the infantry attacks were repeated, but without success, owing to the want of artillery co-operation, which had to be withheld because the telephone wires connecting the observers with their guns had been cut by the enemy's fire, and the gunners, uninformed of the position of the infantry, could not continue their fire without the risk

taken prisoner described the artillery fire on this day as nothing else than "murder." "My regiment," he said, "never had a chance; there was a shell every ten yards; nothing could live under such a fire." So effectively did the gunners do their gruesome work that when the infantry charged up to the trenches they found them filled with dead and wounded men, while it is related that the survivors crawled painfully out kneeling on the ground and holding up their hands in token of submission. At other places beyond the village the Germans made a brave stand, but only for a time, as our men attacked them with an accumulated fury due to the long and dreary vigil which they had kept in the waterlogged trenches facing the German positions.

of inflicting loss on their friends. The weather, unfortunately, did not permit of aerial observation. The same conditions prevailed on the 12th, and though all counter-attacks were repulsed, no progress could be made, and the troops remained in the positions which they occupied on the night after the first day's battle.

As the result of the three days' battle round Neuve Chapelle a tactical success was won, but nothing more. The casualties were 572 officers and 12,289 men killed, wounded, and missing. Sir John French made the best of the situation, but failed to conceal his disappointment at the limited success which resulted from his plans. The 2nd Army north of the Lys river under the command of General Smith-Dorrien was waiting to co-operate with the 1st Army under General Haig, but as the latter General's troops failed to reach the ridgeway at Fournes, the proposed co-operation broke down. The 2nd Cavalry Division under General Gough moved out of Estaires with the intention of marching into Lille, but, finding its way blocked, it returned to its bivouac. The 17th Brigade of the 8rd Corps seized the village of L'Épinette on the night of March 12th, but could make no progress beyond it. The whole plan of attack, which had been elaborated with infinite pains by Sir John French and his staff, collapsed owing to the unfortunate delay which occurred at Neuve Chapelle on March 10th. The four and a half hours lost on that day were never recovered. Time is everything in war, and a single hour lost may mar the prospects of a whole campaign. This was the lesson of Neuve Chapelle, and one which was brought home to all ranks of the Army in Sir John French's dispatch with the intention of its being turned to good account in the future conduct of the war.

Nothing is more likely to disorganise infantry than a successful bayonet charge. At Neuve Chapelle on the morning of March 10th the officers and men who stormed the German trenches after the artillery bombardment became intoxicated by victory, and temporarily got out of hand. The infantry regulations recognise the danger arising from this cause, and provide against it by requiring company officers immediately to reform ranks after the charge, so that the men may be ready either to follow up their initial success, if so required, or resist counter-attacks, which a resourceful enemy is sure to attempt if he thinks the victorious troops are off their guard. It was the failure of the infantry to rally which was one of the causes of the delay at Neuve Chapelle.

The artillery problem is a difficult one to solve. When

When opposing troops come into contact, co-operation between the artillery and infantry is always difficult, and on March 11th and 12th it completely broke down, owing to the destruction by the enemy's fire of telephone communication between the artillery commander with his guns and the battery observers with the infantry. Arrangements were subsequently made to insure the immediate restoration of communications under like circumstances in future. In the trench war now going on infantry are helpless without the aid of artillery, and if we mean to turn the Germans out of Belgium this can only be done by an enormous expenditure of ammunition. This was the meaning of Sir John French's call for munitions, and this is why the Government then began to take the control of workshops into their own hands. "Battles can be shortened, and the waste of life lessened," wrote Sir John French, "if attacks can be supported by the most efficient and powerful force of artillery available; but an almost unlimited supply of ammunition is necessary, and a most liberal discretionary power as to its use must be given to Artillery Commanders. I am confident that this is the only means by which good results can be obtained with a minimum of loss." Truer words were never written by a British commander. This is a war of guns even more than of men. Whereas artillery used to take a secondary place on the battle-field it now takes the first place. The rifle is no longer the deciding weapon: the machine-gun and high explosive howitzer have supplanted its use. Every hour spent by our workmen in their shops is an hour spent in shortening the war. This was the lesson which the Battle of Neuve Chapelle taught more than any other.

CHAPTER X

FRENCH OFFENSIVE IN CHAMPAGNE AND LORRAINE

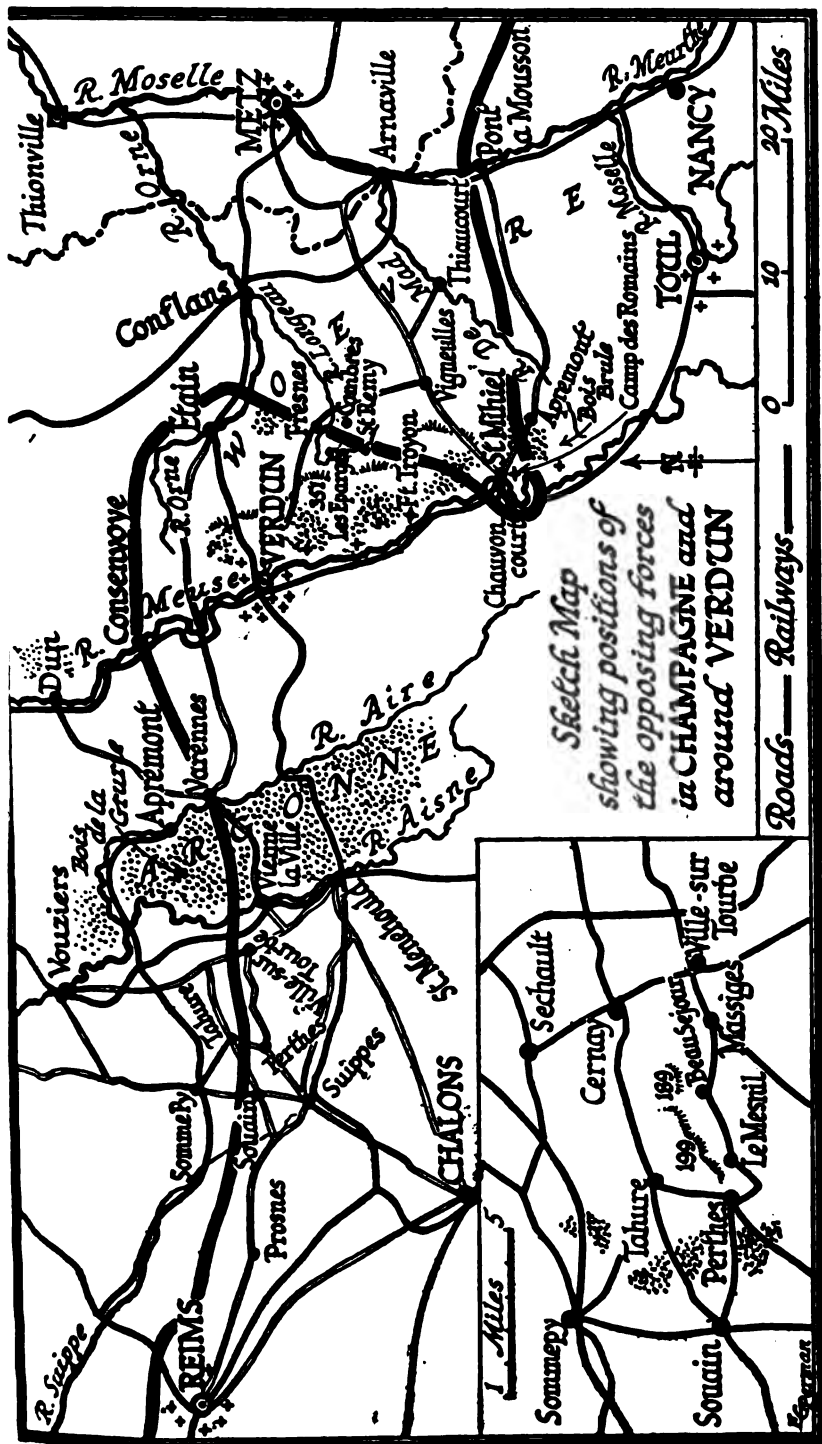
February 15th to April 15th

1915

Situation in Champagne—French offensive—Gain of ground—German position at St. Mihiel—French attack the northern face of the salient—Capture of the Les Eparges position—Strength of the German defences—General Joffre abandons the offensive.

ABOUT the middle of February, after the failure of the abortive German offensive described in Chapter VIII, General Joffre began a series of attacks against the German positions in Champagne and Lorraine, which were undertaken partly to prevent the Germans recovering the initiative which they lost when they dug themselves into their positions in Flanders and the north of France, and partly also as a preparation for those ulterior attacks which the French Commander-in-Chief had in mind when the time had been given for the Allies to develop their resources.

The locality first chosen was one of the strongest points in the French line of defence. A few miles behind the front Perthes-Le Mesnil-Beau Séjour, across which French and Germans were watching each other, was the Verdun-St. Ménehould-Rheims railway running along the whole length of the French position, and fed by two other railways, which lead from the valley of the Marne, and by which reinforcements and supplies reached the French Army. On the left is a large French force facing the Germans in their position north of Rheims, and waiting an opportunity to break through to the north, while on the right is the Argonne forest, which interposes a formidable barrier between the German Army watching the fortress of Verdun and the German Army in Champagne. Fifty miles away to the front is the now dismantled Vauban fortress of Mézières, where the river Meuse makes a bend to the north on its way to Namur, and forms one of the main lines of retreat for the German Army through Belgium. If the French can drive a salient of sufficient width and depth



into the German line in this locality, it would have a reactionary effect on other parts of the enemy's front, and bring about a general retirement in order to preserve the lateral communications of one part of the line with the others.

Among other strategical possibilities, which must have occurred to the mind of General Joffre when he initiated the French offensive in the Champagne district, was the opportunity which a successful advance would give of getting hold of the railway, which runs from Apremont¹ (see map) along the rear of the German position through Somme Py to Rheims. This railroad was being used by the Germans for the same purpose as the St. Ménéhould-Rheims railway was being used by the French, and if the French could get possession of it they would succeed in destroying the line of communication which was in use for the distribution of supplies along the German front from Rheims to the Meuse. The loss of this railway to the Germans would increase the importance of the obstacle of the Argonne, as the high road from Varennes through the Bois de la Grurie is in French hands, although the Germans, who have an advanced post at Varennes, had been fighting hard for more than three months to get astride of this road, and open up another line of communication with Champagne.

The French offensive took place along a five-mile front extending from the west of Perthes to the east of Beau Séjour, and there a large army, composed according to German official reports, which there is no reason to regard as exaggerated, of six French Corps, slowly pushed its way northwards during the latter half of February and the first half of March, gaining a few yards one day and a few more the next, the troops working in reliefs, as they would do at a regular siege, and consolidating their positions as they go along. Although there was only a gain of some two or three kilometres of ground to show for five weeks' continuous fighting, the operation none the less fulfilled the object for which it was undertaken and which was to bring a constant pressure on the German position, and by so doing compel the enemy to use up his reinforcements to prevent a cleavage in the line. Progress was necessarily slow owing to the necessity for proceeding by regular siege methods, which are the only means by which an enemy holding

¹ This Apremont, which is the present rail-head of the line running through the Bois de Grurie from Rheims to Verdun, must not be confounded with the Apremont on the St. Mihiel to Pont-à-Mousson road, round which there has been such heavy fighting during the past three months.

an entrenched position can now be successfully attacked. The procedure adopted was well described in the following words by the "British Observer" who is attached to General Joffre's headquarters, and who was allowed to visit the district while operations were in progress—

"Every day an attack is made on a trench, on the edge of one of the little woods, or to gain ground in one of them; every day the ground gained has to be transformed so as to give protection to its new occupants, and means of access to their supports; every night, and on many days, the enemy's counter-attacks have to be repulsed. Each attack has to be prepared by a violent and accurate artillery fire, and it may be said that a trench has to be morally captured by gunfire before it can be actually seized by the infantry. Once in the new trench the men have to work with their entrenching tools without exposing themselves, and wait for a counter-attack, doing meanwhile what damage they can to the enemy with hand grenades and machine guns. Thus the amount of rifle fire is very small: it is a war of explosives and bayonets."

Always alert and watchful for danger, the Germans brought up reinforcements of men and guns, and strengthened their defences behind the fighting line. If the French pressure could have been maintained, and increased, the effect would have been to cause a further diversion of German troops to the threatened point, but after pursuing their vigorous offensive for nearly five weeks our Allies discovered, what was brought home to us at Neuve Chapelle, that success in trench war was dependent on an unlimited supply of ammunition, and in the spring of 1915 the output of the French factories fell far short of the requirements of the situation. General Joffre consequently decided to postpone further offensive operations in this region till his batteries were fully provided with ammunition, and the British Army was better prepared for co-operative action.

The Germans still continued to hold on to St. Mihiel and its suburb Chauvencourt on the left bank of the Meuse. It will be remembered that after the retreat from the Marne, when the Crown Prince's army was driven back to the Meuse on the north of Verdun, a flying column, accompanied by heavy artillery, was sent out from Metz to seize the town of St. Mihiel and construct a bridge-head on the west bank of the river, the intention being to isolate Verdun from Toul by cutting the

railway at this point, and at the same time establish a *point d'appui* across the river with the purpose of linking up with the German Army operating north of Verdun, and so completing the investment of the fortress. The attack took the French by surprise, and when the powerful fort known as the Camp de Romain (see sketch), which dominates the river-bed at St. Mihiel, was destroyed by the German guns, the town fell into the enemy's hands without further fighting. The French sent out a mobile force from Toul to operate on both banks of the Meuse, and endeavour to displace the Germans, who had meanwhile dug themselves securely into their positions surrounding St. Mihiel. The French reached the road between St. Mihiel and Pont à Mousson, which latter town they occupied, and used as an advanced base for operating northwards, but they failed to advance beyond the line drawn on the sketch, and communications between St. Mihiel and Metz remained open along the road through Vigneulles, and by the railway through Thiancourt¹ and Arnaville down the left bank of the Moselle.

On the north the French pushed their way during the first fortnight in February along the front occupied, and which is shown in the sketch, down towards the St. Mihiel-Vigneulles road. Holding all the heights of the Côtes de Meuse, which extend for some six or eight miles east of the river, on the 17th February they consolidated their position by capturing a powerful German redoubt, which had been constructed on the hills overlooking the village of Les Eparges in the valley of the Longeau river. This opened the way south, and gave the French a chance to reach the St. Mihiel-Vigneulles road, when the Germans would have had to evacuate St. Mihiel in order to save their communications with Metz. The position at this time was interesting, and especially so because it was another proof of how enormously the power of the defence has been increased since the last great European war. Looking at the sketch of the St. Mihiel position, it would at first sight seem impossible that so contracted an enclave could be pushed into the French lines without imminent risk to the German force holding the bridge-head on the river. Yet this force, which was practically besieged by the French on three fronts, had maintained its position for nearly five months in spite of almost continuous efforts on the French side to force it to retire. German tenacity has a good deal to say in the matter, but so

¹ The branch railway from Thiancourt to Arnaville has been accidentally omitted from the sketch.

also have machine guns and high explosive howitzers, which have revolutionised tactics and rendered the attack of an entrenched position practically prohibitive except when undertaken by regular siege operations.

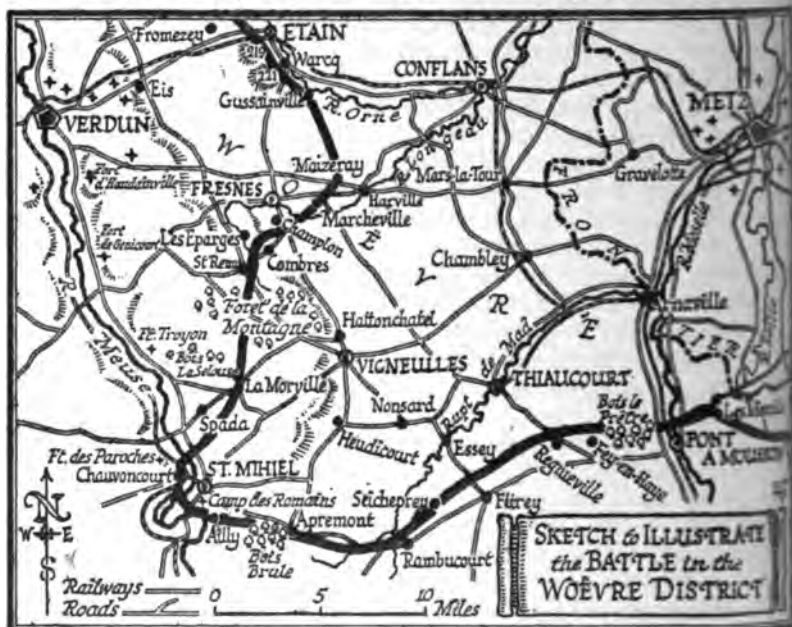
During the month of March the French transferred their efforts from Champagne to the Woëvre district with the intention of contracting, and possibly removing altogether, the German wedge at St. Mihiel. West of the village of Les Eparges, which is ten miles south-east of Verdun, there is a long spur which is thrown off by the cliffs overlooking the right bank of the Meuse, and which, from its height (846 metres) and commanding position, dominates the valley of the Longeau river and the plain east of it. This spur, which juts out into the plain for more than 1400 metres, was seized by the Germans on the 21st September, 1914, and there they constructed a formidable field fortress, which they armed with heavy howitzers and machine guns borrowed from the Metz forts. As long as the Germans held the Les Eparges position the French offensive was paralysed in this direction, and this determined General Joffre to lay siege to the position, which French troops attacked throughout March, 1915, and finally carried by assault on April 9th. The assault was a brilliant feat of arms, which has been graphically described in the following extract from a French official report—

“Two regiments of Infantry and a battalion of Chasseurs were ordered to storm the summit. It was raining, and the rifle magazines being choked with mud the men could only use the bayonet. At 10 in the morning of the 8th April the summit and western crest were in our hands. We then pushed towards the eastern crest, and at midnight, after thirteen hours of uninterrupted and furious fighting, almost the whole position of Les Eparges was in our possession, the enemy only retaining a small triangle at the eastern extremity. He was still counter-attacking, but his effort lacked vigour. At 8 in the afternoon of the 9th we again attacked. The ground was a honeycomb of deep holes, in which men sometimes completely disappeared; a hurricane of wind and rain was raging; but our Infantry, covered by our guns, pushed steadily on and reached the eastern extremity of the plateau. At this moment the summit became suddenly shrouded with fog, and our guns, being no longer able to fire, the enemy counter-attacked, and we fell back, but only for a moment. Half an hour later a furious charge made us masters of all that we had previously gained.

At 10 in the evening we held the whole ridge of Les Eparges. Our long effort was crowned with success."

Ever since losing the position the Germans have been making counter-attacks in order to regain it, but the attacks have all failed, and the French are now too strongly entrenched on the spur to be turned out except by an overwhelming force, which the German staff are not in a position to bring into line at this point of the battle-front.

Simultaneously with the attack on Les Eparges the French



pushed their offensive along both sides of the St. Mihiel wedge. The battle-front, which on the 15th February extended in a nearly straight line from the south of Etain to Fresnes, was gradually made to bulge out eastwards in the direction of Conflans. On April 6th the French occupied the village of Gussainville, and next day Hills 219 and 221, south of Etain (see sketch), were seized, while the French outposts were pushed towards the villages of Maizeray and Marchéville. The French artillery then commanded the Orne valley south-east of Etain, and, what is more important, the railway to Conflans. On the southern face of the wedge the French made their way well to

the north of the St. Mihiel-Pont à Mousson road, and established strong posts in the Bois le Prêtre, Bois Mont Mare, two miles north of Flirey, and Bois Brulé. On April 1st a movement of French troops began west of Pont à Mousson with the object of reaching Thiaucourt and cutting railway communications between Metz and St. Mihiel, the Germans having extended the branch line from Arnaville to Thiaucourt by a light railway leading to the Meuse at St. Mihiel. The village of Fey en Haye was occupied on the 1st, and Regniéville on the 8rd, the latter village being within four miles of Thiaucourt. The Germans at St. Mihiel had an alternative line of communication with Metz along the Vigneulles-Chambley road, and this was threatened by the French occupation of Les Eparges, but the enemy had a strong *point d'appui* at Combres, and his troops would have to be turned out of that position before the road is open to Vigneulles. The sketch map indicates the positions of the opposing forces in this locality better than words can do, the two black lines marked on the sketch gradually drawing nearer to each other; but here, as elsewhere, French progress must necessarily be slow, as the country is intersected with woods, streams, and ravines, which lend themselves to defensive warfare, and make a rapid offensive under present-day condition impossible. At one time we were hoping to see the two black lines gradually drawing nearer to each other, but when General Joffre discovered the great strength of the German positions between the Longeau and Moselle in a district which was intersected with woods, streams, and ravines, all lending themselves to defensive warfare, he decided that the cost of reclaiming St. Mihiel would be too heavy to justify the operation, and he gave orders for the troops to be drawn off till a more favourable opportunity offered for a further attack.

When the Germans abandoned the strategical offensive, St. Mihiel lost its importance, and there was no longer any military reason for holding it. If the German staff had any intention of breaking through the French line of defence between Verdun and Toul, a bridge-head on the Meuse would provide a good starting-off point; but they must long ago have realised the hopelessness of any such endeavour. As elsewhere, so at St. Mihiel, their plan appears to be to hold what they have won, and use the conquered territory in order to bargain for peace. The hope is a vain one, for there can be no thought of peace till the invader is driven out of France and Belgium, and the war carried into his own country.

CHAPTER XI

April 15th to May 15th

1915

British landing in the Gallipoli Peninsula—Mackensen's invasion of Galicia—
Capture of Hill 60—Second Battle of Ypres—Abortive British offensive
at Festubert—French offensive in Artois.

AFTER the attempt of the Fleet to clear a passage through the Dardanelles on March 18th had failed, there was nothing left to do but wait for the arrival of the land forces before renewing operations, which were confined for the next five weeks to mine-sweeping work, and the occasional bombardment of the forts in the Narrows.

The disembarkation of the Expeditionary Force began on April 25th, and was announced the following day in a joint War Office and Admiralty *communiqué*, which stated that a landing had been successfully accomplished in the face of serious opposition from the enemy posted in strong entrenchments protected by barbed wire entanglements. Three separate disembarkations took place—the Australian and New Zealand Division under the command of Major-General Sir W. R. Birdwood, K.C.S.I., C.B., D.S.O., on the shore north of Gaba Tepe (see map), the 29th Division composed of troops from India, and the Colonial Garrisons, under command of Major-General A. C. Hunter-Weston, C.B., D.S.O., on the extreme south end of the Gallipoli Peninsula, and a French Division on the Asiatic side of the Straits in the neighbourhood of Kum Kale. The French troops were at that time commanded by General d'Amade, who on account of illness was subsequently replaced by General Gouraud. The whole expedition was commanded by General Sir Ian Hamilton, G.C.B., who directed the operations in co-operation with Admiral de Robeck.

The operation of landing the troops mentioned above was graphically described by Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, who was allowed to go to the Dardanelles as representing the Association of Newspaper Proprietors, and whose dispatches supplementing

he official bulletins were doubtless read by all who were following the course of this wondrous campaign. Although the landing at all three points was successfully accomplished the losses on the side of the Allies were very heavy owing to the elaborate defences which the Turks had constructed under the direction of German engineers, and the skill with which the defence was organised. The advanced guard of the Gaba Tepe force was embarked in three battleships which reached their position off the coast at 1 a.m. on April 25th, the troops being sent ashore in the warships' boats towed by pinnaces, and being followed by seven destroyers and a number of transports containing the rest of the Force with its guns and equipment. The landing took place rather more north of Gaba Tepe than where it was intended, only some thirty or forty yards of beach intervening between the sea and the high cliffs which rise nearly precipitously from the shore. The Turks were entrenched on the beach under the cliff, and opened fire on the boats just as they reached the shore, but they were speedily dislodged with the bayonet from their first position, as also from a second one on the cliff which was stormed by the Australian covering parties, who then advanced inland in order to drive the enemy away from the coast, and enable the transports to land the rest of the troops and supplies in safety. Later in the morning, however, the Turks were reinforced and counter-attacked the Australians in such numbers that they had to retire to the crest of the cliff, where they entrenched themselves against further attacks. Throughout the night of the 25th, and during the whole of the 26th, the Turks, largely reinforced and led by their German officers, continued their attacks with great determination; but with the help of the fire of the ships their offensive was completely broken, and by the night of the 26th the Colonial troops had dug themselves securely into their positions on the lower slopes of the Sari Bair ridge-way north-west of the Bokhali valley. On the 27th the Turks renewed their attacks with the help of a reinforcement of field guns, but they could make no impression on the Australians and New Zealanders, who held a semi-circular line of trenches on the cliff covering the descent to the beach, which was being turned into an advanced base for the advancing troops in this locality. The following quotation from Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett's report gives some idea of the difficulties experienced in the disembarkation, and of the magnitude of the operations to which our Army and Navy are committed.

"Every round of ammunition," he writes, "all water, and

all supplies had to be landed on a narrow beach, and then carried up pathless hills, valleys, and bluffs, several hundred feet high, to the firing line. The whole mass of troops concentrated on a very small area, and unable to reply, were exposed to a relentless and incessant shrapnel fire, which swept every yard of the ground, although fortunately a great deal of it was badly aimed, or burst too high. The reserves were engaged in road-making, or in carrying supplies to the crest of the cliff, and in answering more calls for ammunition. . . . On going ashore through an avalanche of burning shrapnel, you land on a beach thirty yards wide between the water and the cliff which rises steeply for some hundreds of feet. There are regiments waiting to move to the trenches, fatigue parties unloading boats and lighters, others making great pyramids of tinned meat and biscuits, others fetching water, of which a supply has been found on shore. There are trains of mules dragging field guns into position, Indians in charge of mountain guns, dressing stations where the wounded are hastily tended before being sent to the ships. Other fatigue parties are laying telegraph and telephone wires, and still others carrying supplies up the cliffs."

The 29th Division of the Southern Force was landed simultaneously with the Northern Force, and under the same conditions, the warships covering the disembarkation with the fire of their guns. Landings were effected on five different beaches near Cape Tekeh, Cape Helles, Sedd-el-Bahr, and Morto Bay. At the former two places, and at Morto Bay, the troops gained a footing on land without much difficulty, but in and round the fort at Sedd-el-Bahr the Turks were so strongly entrenched that after getting on shore in two places the landing parties had to withdraw till the morning of the 26th, when the force landed under Cape Helles made a flank attack on the Sedd-el-Bahr position, and drove the Turks out of their entrenchments. By the evening of the 27th, the 29th Division after hard fighting established itself across the whole of the Peninsula from Esik Hisarlik to a point on the western coast two miles from Cape Tekeh.

The French landed on the same day at Kum Kale, not for the purpose of operating on the Asiatic shore of the Straits, as was first reported, but as a feint made with the object of diverting attention from the British disembarkation on the opposite shore. After the landing had been successfully accomplished, and Kum Kale occupied, the French crossed over to the Gallipoli Peninsula on the evening of the 27th, and joined

the British troops. On the nights of May 1st and 2nd, determined attacks were made by the Turks all along the line held by the Allied troops, and repulsed, as we were informed by Lord Crewe on May 11th, with "inconsiderable loss to ourselves," and with "heavy loss to the enemy." Meanwhile the work of consolidating the positions occupied went on continuously, and by the middle of May they were reported to be secure against



any possible counter-attack. Discovering this, the Turks abandoned their costly attacks, preferring to revert to the defensive tactics which were so successful at Plevna and the Shipka Pass, and await attack in their entrenched positions. The Allied troops reached the neighbourhood of Krithia, where their further progress was barred by the Turkish entrenchments, and from where they could see the enemy's working parties converting Achi Baba into a formidable stronghold.

In the Dardanelles, as in other battle areas, tactical results depended on there being an unlimited supply of ammunition at the disposal of the artillery commanders.

The disembarkation of so large a force—29,000 men were landed on the first day of the disembarkation alone—on a hostile coast and under the conditions described is unique in the history of war. So formidable was the task entrusted to Sir Ian Hamilton that General von der Goltz, who is well acquainted with the country, and had supervised the arrangements made for putting it into a state of defence, foretold its certain failure, and after learning of what was intended affirmed that British troops were about to try what the Germans with all their experience of war would under no circumstances have dared to attempt. The General's forecast proved to be wrong. for, though the expedition eventually came to an abortive end, the antecedent difficulty of disembarkation was successfully accomplished, and safe *points d'appui* were secured on the coast.

A glance at the sketch map accompanying this chapter shows the nature of the country over which the Expeditionary Force would have to fight its way northwards through the Peninsula, the interior of which is a mass of tortuous hills and ravines with here and there some commanding points which dominate the surrounding country. Achi Baba is one such position, rising as it does for 780 feet above sea-level and commanding the road from Sedd-el-Bahr through Krithia to Maidos as well as the Suandere valley on the north. Achi Baba has been described as the Spion Kop of the Gallipoli Peninsula, and before the Allied troops could pass it by, the hill would have to be stormed. This is where it was hoped the guns of the Fleet would come in, for the hill offers a good target from the sea. Beyond the Suandere river is the high ridge known as Pasha Dag (see map) which encircles the town of Maidos, and also commands the road leading to it from the south of the peninsula. If the Allies could gain possession of the Pasha Dag plateau, Maidos would become untenable, and what remains of the Kilid Bahr defences would be turned. Beyond the Narrows is another formidable defensive position, shown on the sketch as Mal Tepe, overlooking the Bokhali valley, and stretching across the peninsula till it meets the Sari Bari ridgeway, on the western slopes of which General Birdwood's troops dug themselves into their entrenched positions. The nature of the country favours the defence, but after the initial difficulty of the landing had been got over no one doubted the capability of our troops to clear a way through the peninsula.

"The expedition to the Dardanelles has been criticised because it diverted strength from Flanders and the north of France, where Sir John French wants every man, gun, and shell he can get. Concentration, say the critics, not dispersion, should be the guiding principle of all strategical combinations. We have first of all to drive the Germans out of Belgium and the north of France, and when we have done this it will be time enough to think about driving the Turks out of Europe. The critics who talk and write thus misconceive the conditions under which we are waging this great war, and undervalue the advantage which our sea supremacy confers on ourselves and our Allies. The primary purpose of seizing Constantinople is not to expel the Turks from Europe, though that will incidentally follow the success of our Army, but to open up communications with Russia, facilitate the intervention of Neutral States, and establish a fresh base for operations against Austria-Hungary. It is easier to attack Austria from the south than Germany from the west or sea, and if we can reach Vienna up the valley of the Danube the effect will be to divert German troops for the defence of Germany's southern frontier, and by so going relieve the pressure on Belgium. It has been well said that we must approach this war with a big map in hand, and regard it with the eyes of the strategist rather than with those of a professor of tactics."

These words were written by the author of this volume in the month of May 1915, and there is not one word which he would now wish to unsay. The expedition ended abortively, but it need not, and ought not, to have done so had Sir Ian Hamilton been given a force adequate for so large an operation of war.

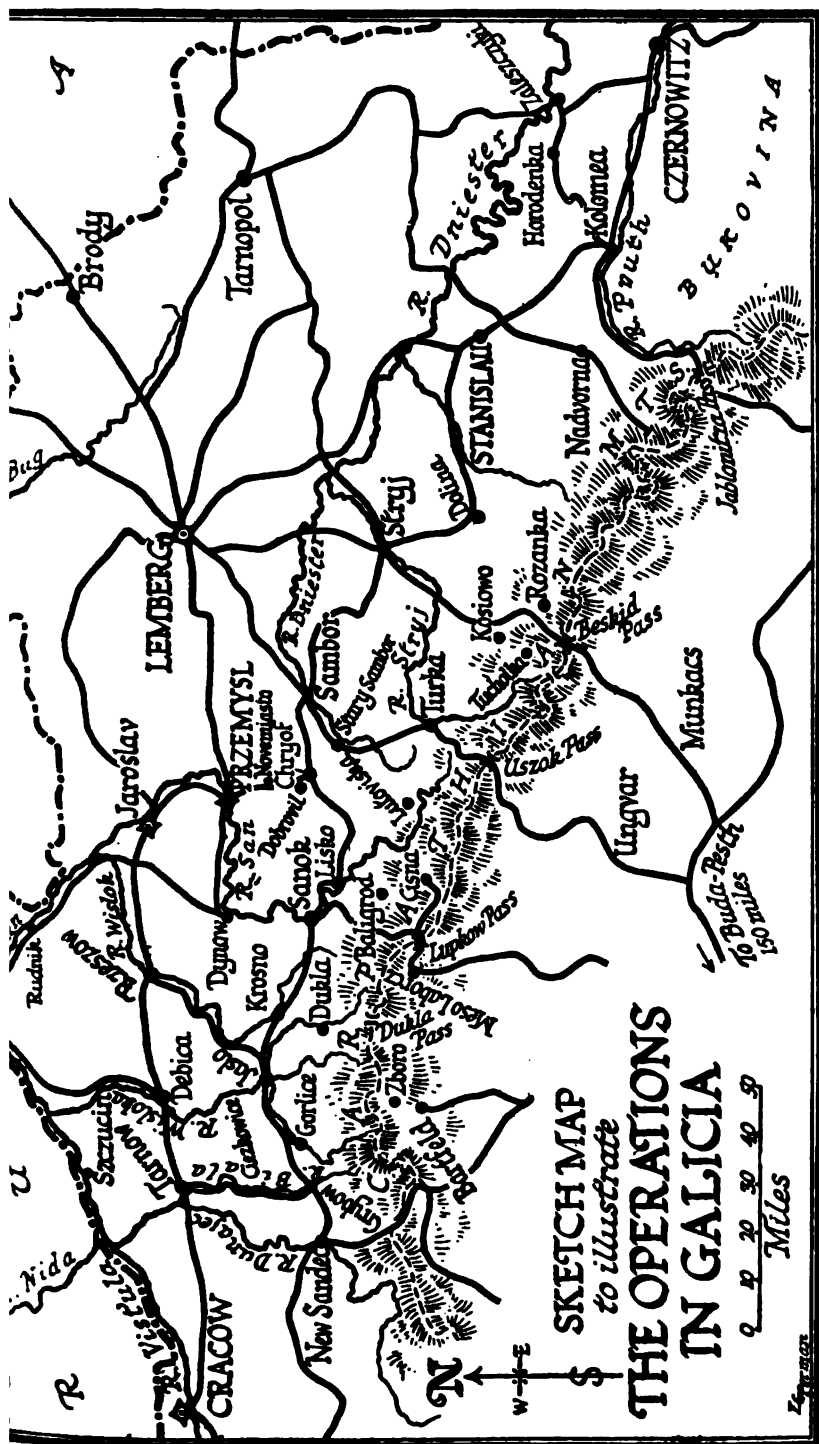
RUSSIAN DEFEAT IN GALICIA

Turning now to the Russian theatre of war, a great change took place in the situation in Galicia at the end of April, when the position was as follows. The Russians held the lines of the Dumajec and Biala rivers from the Vistula down to Zborov, and from thence the whole crest of the Carpathian mountains up to the Uszok Pass, their troops on the right flank being pushed well down the southern slopes of the mountains. East of the Uszok Pass a German Army some six Corps strong had gained a footing on the north side of the Tucholka and Beskid Passes, and was trying to move down the Stryj valley in co-operation with an Austro-Hungarian Army, which had entered Galicia through the Jablonitza Pass. On their extreme

left the Russians, after evacuating the Bukovina, had retreated behind the Dniester, where they were awaiting the arrival of reinforcements. During the last fortnight in April heavy fighting took place between the Tucholka and Jablonitza Passes, and especially in the region of Kosiowo, without decisive consequences. The Russian invasion of Hungary was checked, while the enemy's attempt to seize the railway junction of Stryj had equally failed, the result being a stalemate.

During the last week of April the scene of interest was transferred from eastern to western Galicia, where the German staff had been concentrating for some weeks a large Austro-German Army behind the Dunajec river, with the object of striking a sudden blow at the Russian 8rd Army, which under General Dimitrieff was watching the passages over the Dunajec and Biala rivers. The plan was well conceived, and carefully concealed, the concentration being carried out with the utmost secrecy, and being unknown to the Russian commander till the storm suddenly burst over his head on April 28th. On that day General Mackensen, who was placed in executive command of the Austro-German Army, launched his attack from New Sandec against Dimitrieff's left, which was driven out of Gorlice towards Jaslo. This initial success was followed up on May 1st and 2nd by an overwhelming attack directed by Mackensen in person, with the Archduke Friedrich looking on, against the Russian centre at Cieszkowice on the Biala river, the infantry attack being preceded by a heavy gun bombardment, to which General Dimitrieff had no guns to reply.¹ Driven out of their entrenchments by the artillery bombardment, the Russians fell back all along the line behind the Wisloka river, which, rising in the Carpathian mountains near the Dukla Pass, flows nearly parallel to the Dunajec till it reaches the Vistula at Ostrowek about thirty miles above the confluence of that river with the Vistula. Mackensen gave his

¹ "Special reports from the West Galician battlefield state that prisoners describe the effect of our artillery as appalling, especially at Gorlice, where the Russians fought stubbornly, and endured the terrible fire for four hours, during which divisions dwindled to regiments, and regiments to companies. All staff officers of one division were killed or wounded, and several generals were also killed or wounded. Gorlice was set on fire by the bombardment and destroyed. The southern wing of the Russians has been broken along a front of 36 kilometres, and the Russians were forced not only to abandon the first line, but also the villages behind these lines. The centre of the Russians was also so shaken by Monday evening from the shelling of its two wings that they had to abandon their positions. Thousands of prisoners were taken. Our victory is especially important in that it deprives the Russian Carpathian Army of protection for its flank."—German Main Headquarters communiqué, May 6th.



victorious troops no rest, but sent them after the Russians who lost heavily in prisoners on their way back to the San. On May 7th the German advanced guard crossed the Wisłoka river at Jasło, and pushed back the retreating Russians ten miles further east across the Wisłok river, a tributary of the San. On May 10th the Austro-German Army was deployed along the line Szczucin-Debień-Krosno-Baligród, a remnant of the 8th Army still clinging to the right bank of the Vistula, and yielding ground slower than the Russian centre and left wing, who were exposed to the full force of the enemy's attack. On this day the 8th Russian Army in the neighbourhood of the Lupków Pass began to fall back on the upper San river to save its communications, which were being threatened by Mackensen's rapid advance. A further advance was made on May 11th, Dynów and Sanok being occupied on the 12th, and Dobrowil on the 14th, on which day Mackensen's left wing reached the left bank of the San river at Jarasłów, the latter place being stormed by the Prussian Guard on the 15th. Two days later the enemy's advanced guards reached Sambor on the upper Dniester river, and occupied Drohobycz, which is half way between Sambor and Strzyż. The whole of western Galicia was then in Austrian possession, and Przemyśl was in danger of being invested.

The defeat of the 8th Russian Army in western Galicia has been likened to the defeat of the 10th Army in East Prussia in the middle of February, when General Bulgakoff's corps was surprised on the Augerap river, and practically annihilated: but the consequences of General Dimitrieff's defeat were far more serious than those which followed the defeat of the 10th Russian Army. That army was on the extreme right flank of the Russian battle-front, and, as far as the other Russian Armies were concerned, it was operating *en l'air* with the intention of invading East Prussia without co-operation with the Russian forces in Poland. The case was different with General Dimitrieff when he was driven from his defensive positions between the Vistula and the Carpathians, for his army was the connecting link between the Russian centre in Poland and the Russian left in Galicia, and his defeat exposed not only the right flank of the 8th Russian Army, which was about to descend into Hungary, but also the left flank of the Army north of the Vistula, which was holding the line of the Nida river. The line of the Nida had to be abandoned, and the approaches to Warsaw from Cracow consequently uncovered, while south of the Vistula the Russian 8th Army

was compelled to retire from the Carpathian crest as far as the Stryj valley, and take up a new line of defence on the upper Dniester.

While these astounding events were taking place in western Galicia, the Russian Army which retired from the Bukovina when the Austrian right wing invaded it, suddenly resumed the offensive, crossed the Dniester in force near Zaleszczyki, attacked and defeated the Austrians in the neighbourhood of Horodenka, drove them back to the Pruth, capturing 20,000 prisoners on the way, and reoccupied Nadvorna. This movement, however, was not continued, for General Linsingen, at the head of the Austro-German Army, which had been threatening Stryj all through April had reached Dolina, and it was necessary to decisively defeat this army before advancing south of the Pruth. The Russian commander, however, declined battle, and fell back behind the Dniester in conformity with the general retirement, which had been ordered by the Grand Duke. The fact was, the Russians had exhausted their supplies of ammunition, and could no longer stand up against the Germans. Retirement was the only alternative to annihilation.

General Mackensen's victory, though locally disastrous to the Russian plan of campaign, was not decisive. The Russians were defeated, but not demoralised. Their retreat from western Galicia was an ordered retirement, not a rout. The Russian Armies were still "in being," and reinforcements were arriving. If German troops had been detached from east to west, or if Austrian troops had been sent to the Italian frontier, this could only have been done by weakening the line of defence at some point where troops were necessary to oppose the Russian invasion. Herein lay the significance of the intervention of Italy which took place at this time and will be referred to in another chapter. If Italy were to put forth her full strength she could place and maintain in the field a fighting force of a million and half of men, and so great a reinforcement of strength thrown into the scale at such a time ought to weigh it down on the side of the Allies.

CAPTURE OF HILL 60

On the 18th of April, a bulletin was received from Sir John French reporting an attack by the 2nd British Army on Hill 60, which is a dominating point on the north side of the Ypres-Lille railway. As long as it was held by the Germans there

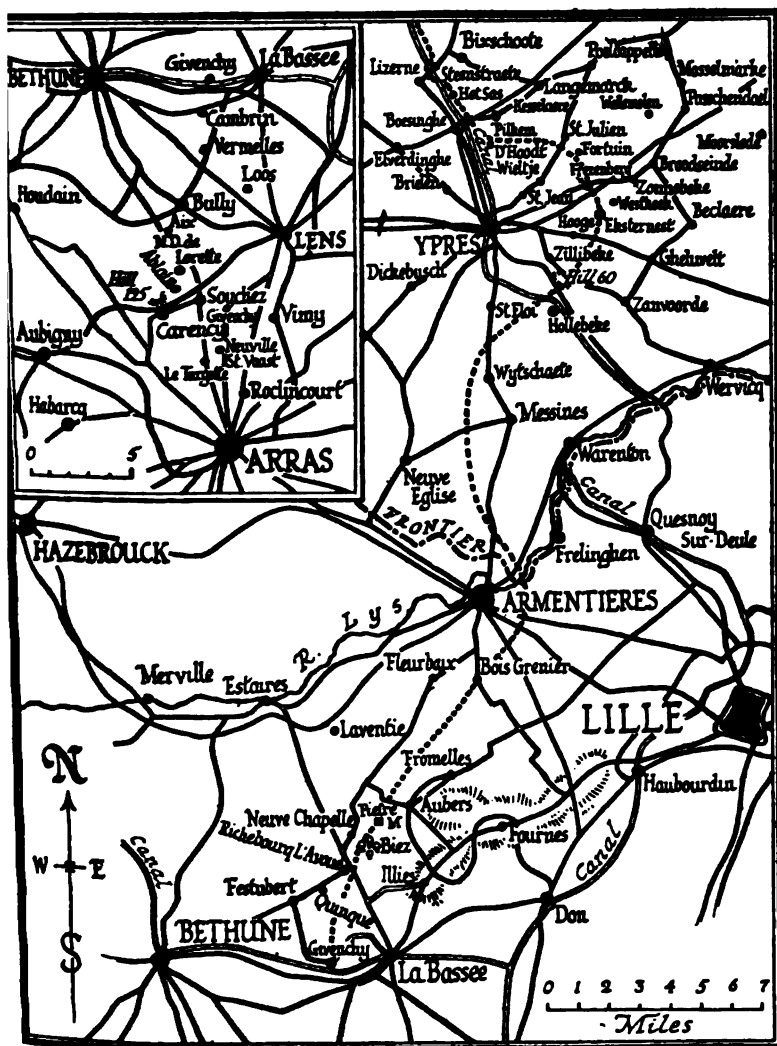
was always the danger of their using it as a *point d'appui* for an attack on Ypres, coming along the roads leading from the Lys river. General Smith-Dorrien decided to capture the position, and with this object his sappers had been busy during the first half of April in constructing mines under the German trenches. These were exploded on the evenings of the 17th April, when the infantry rushed in and assaulted the position, surprising the Germans, and capturing the whole of their first line trenches. Then began a battle for possession of the hill, which lasted till the night of the 21st, when the Germans were finally driven off the summit and the slopes leading down from it. For five days and nights the battle raged with unceasing violence, and was the occasion of some of the severest hand-to-hand fighting which has taken place during the war between British and German troops. After describing the events of these memorable days, the "Eye Witness" with Army Headquarters writes as follows—

"The attack and defence of Hill 60 was a mere episode in the British operations, and a very minor occurrence in the whole of the front held by the Allies, but none the less it will go down in history among the finest exploits performed by British troops during the war. Officers who experienced the bombardment prior to the attack of the Prussian Guard on November 11th, and also underwent that directed on Hill 60, state that the latter was by far the worse of the two. What our troops withstood can to some degree be realised when it is remembered that the space fought over between April 17th and 21st was only about 250 yards in length and 200 in depth. On to that small area the enemy for hours on end hurled tons of metal and high explosives, and at times the hill top was wreathed in clouds of poisonous fumes. And yet our gallant infantry did not give way. They stood firm under a fire which swept away whole sections at a time, filled the trenches with dead bodies, and so cumbered the approaches to the front line that reinforcements could not reach it without having to climb over the prostrate forms of their fallen comrades."

SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES

Hardly had our troops secured possession of Hill 60 than the Germans launched an attack against what is known as the Ypres salient, with the intention of driving the Allied troops out of the enclave thrust into their lines in this locality.

The battle began on the evening of the 22nd April, and after nearly continuous fighting lasting over twenty days, the



German attacks came to an end by sheer force of lassitude. As a result of this prolonged battle the Ypres salient has been contracted in size for reasons which will be presently explained,

but after losing 80,000 killed and wounded men the Germans are no nearer Calais than they were before they made this second tremendous effort to break through the British lines.

The following is a brief summary of what took place between the 22nd April and the 12th May. The 2nd British Army, commanded by General Smith-Dorrien, was holding a line which extended in a north-westerly direction, passing about two miles west of Gheluvelt, and thence to the cross roads (see map) at Broodseinde, from where the line struck the Poelcappelle-Ypres road at Kesselaere. From that point the French Colonial troops prolonged the line to the north-west, their trenches being carried round the north side of Langemarck, and then going in a nearly straight line to Steenstraete on the Ypres Canal, whence the Belgians took up the line along the left bank of the Canal and Yser river down to the coast. On the evening of April 22nd the Germans, giving no warning, let loose a supply of asphyxiating gas, which was emitted from cylinders, and favoured by the north wind rolled down across the French trenches west of Langemarck. Overcome by the poisonous fumes, the French left their trenches, and hurriedly retired out of reach of the gas to the Ypres Canal. After allowing time for the gas to disperse, the Germans followed the French as far as the Canal, crossed it at Steenstraete, and seized the village of Lizerne on the night of the 23rd. Next day the French troops rallied, drove the Germans out of Lizerne, and re-established their line on the right bank of the Canal, the Germans retaining possession of a bridge-head at Steenstraete.

The sudden retreat of the French from Langemarck created what Sir John French described as an "unexpected situation" by uncovering the British left, and leaving a big gap in the Allies' line south of Langemarck, whereupon Brigadier-General Turner, commanding the 3rd Canadian Brigade, quick to perceive the danger, changed front from north-east to north-west, and so saved the situation. Had he waited for orders, and kept his brigade in its original position, the Germans would have broken through to Ypres before reinforcements could have arrived. Then ensued a terrific battle, which lasted almost continuously night and day from Friday, April 23rd, to Wednesday the 28th. All through the 23rd the Canadians held on to their position astride of the Poelcappelle-Ypres road, north and west of the village of St. Julien, with a tenacity to which Sir John French has paid a high tribute of praise: but on the 24th the Germans concentrated against St. Julien.

and on the 25th the Canadians fell back to Fortuin, leaving St. Julien in German hands. On the 26th the position becoming critical, a combined Anglo-French attack was made along the whole front from Steenstraete to the Passchendael road north-west of Zonnebeke, the result being to break the strength of the German offensive, which began to wear itself out, for on the 27th the attacks were feebler, and on the 28th they ceased altogether in the direction indicated. The gap had been filled, and French and British troops had once more joined hands together.

The salient as contracted by the French retirement was found to be too narrow at its apex for defensive purposes, and on May 8rd Sir John French decided to still further contract it by withdrawing from Zonnebeke, and taking up the position shown in the dotted line on the sketch accompanying this article. This brought the first phase of the twenty-days' battle round Ypres to an end, the results achieved by the Germans being quite incommensurate with the appalling losses incurred in their reckless attacks. Whereas on April 22nd the British front was some fifteen miles broad, and some five or six deep, on May 8rd the line was reduced to a breadth of eight, and a depth of three miles. The position, as contracted, is by no means an ideal one, but it constitutes an offensive *point d'appui*, which may presently prove to be most useful to the Allies if the Anglo-French offensive develops satisfactorily south of the Lys river.¹

Thwarted in their attacks on the Ypres salient, the Germans returned on May 5th to the attack of Hill 60, and with the help of the poisonous gases, which they have taken into systematic use, they succeeded in regaining a footing on the hill, but on the following day Sir John French reported that some of the lost trenches had been recovered by successful counter-attacks. In the middle of May possession of the hill appeared to be equally shared by British and Germans alike. Meanwhile on May 8th another, and very determined, attack was made on the Ypres salient along the Poelcappelle road, the Germans at first succeeding in penetrating the British lines, both at Frezenberg and Wieltje; but their success was short-lived, for counter-attacks recovered all the ground lost. On Sunday, May 9th, masses of infantry were hurled against the British

¹ Further reference to the Second Battle of Ypres is made in Chapter XIII, when additional light is thrown on the battle and its results by the dispatch of Field-Marshal Sir John French, covering the period between April 5th and June 15th.

positions both on the north and south-east of the salient, but the attacks were all beaten off with corresponding slaughter. A renewal of the attack met with the same fate on the 10th, and on the 11th the Germans threw up the sponge, despairing of success. The second phase of the twenty-days' battle had ended, as the first did, in a complete victory for the British troops. The cordon round Ypres was intact, and the position safe.

Given a fair field with an unpoisoned air, and the issue between the British and German soldier is never doubtful. Again and again has the Volunteer shown his superiority over the Conscript. The reason of this ascendancy is not hard to understand. The German conscript fights under compulsion, the British volunteer from a sense of duty. Voluntary service is winning all along the line, and as the war goes on its advantages will become more and more appreciable. The inspiration is there. All that is wanted is organisation to give it direction, and the equipment necessary to make it effective.¹

On Sunday, May 9th, at the very moment when the Germans were launching their final attack against the Ypres salient, Sir John French ordered the 1st British Army, under General Haig, to take the offensive all along the line from Bois Grenier (see sketch) to Festubert, with the object of supporting a French offensive north of Arras. The British attack on this day failed owing to the ineffectiveness of the preparatory artillery bombardment, due, as has since been made known, to the want of a sufficient supply of high-explosive shells. On the left our troops made some progress in the direction of Fromelles, and managed to establish themselves on the lower slopes of the Aubers ridge, but the gain of ground was only of trifling extent, while on the right the attack was pulled up at once owing to the Germans having strengthened their defences in preparation for it. The troops were drawn off at night, and the attack was not renewed till May 15th, when after

¹ Although conscription has been temporarily adopted in Great Britain in deference to the wishes of the military authorities there are many who think, as the writer does, that the Military Service Act was unnecessary, and that every man in the Empire would have come forward to fight for his country had a direct personal appeal been made to him without any threat of what would happen if he failed to respond to the call. Life would not have been worth living for the "shirker," who would have been shunned by his fellow countrymen as a moral leper, with whom association would have been impossible. Conscription saved the military authorities from the burden of voluntary recruiting; but this is all that can be said for it, while it discounted the moral effect created by the spectacle of a whole empire rising as one man to punish the evildoers who have brought the indescribable misery of this war on the world.

bombardment lasting over several days the 1st Corps made a successful advance in the night between Richebourg l'Avoué and Festubert, crossing the Festubert-Quinchy road, and advancing for a mile into the German lines. The advance was renewed on the 16th, but, as will be explained in Chapter XII, had to be abandoned just when it seemed to be progressing favourably for the want of necessary ammunition to maintain the artillery bombardment.

FRENCH OFFENSIVE IN ARTOIS

Simultaneously with the abortive attempt of the 1st British Army to reach the Fournes ridgeway the French on the north of Arras began an offensive movement which resulted in a considerable initial success for the Allied forces. South of the La Bassée-Bethune Canal the Germans seized about the middle of October the railway junction of Lens, and constructed a line of entrenchments on the west of the town, extending from Loos down to Neuville St. Vaast, whence the German line turned south-east round Arras, which had all along been in French possession. The Germans strengthened the defences covering Lens by pushing out an enclave into the French lines, and occupying the high ground which is enclosed by the quadrilateral contained by the four positions of Notre Dame de Lorette, Ablain, Carency including Hill 125, and Souchez, a village on the high road between Arras and Bethune. This quadrilateral position constituted a powerful defensive *point d'appui* for the Germans covering Lens, and General Joffre determined to attack it as an antecedent step to a further advance eastwards.

The attack began early on the morning of May 9th, and up to a point was wholly successful, the Germans being driven out of their fortified positions at Notre Dame de Lorette, Ablain, and Carency, while on the south nearly the whole of the village of Neuville St. Vaast fell into French hands. Our Allies owed their success to the gallantry of their infantry, and also in a large measure to the effective artillery bombardment with high explosive shells, which shattered the German trenches before the infantry attack was launched. In four days' fighting, from May 9th to the 12th, the French captured 5000 prisoners and a quantity of machine guns and war material.

The map shows the significance of this new French offensive. Lens had long been a thorn in General Joffre's side, for its

occupation by the enemy severed railway communication between Arras and Bethune, and compelled the French staff to send reinforcements and supplies to the north by the round-about route of St. Pol. Apart from this, if the French could get to Lens they would threaten La Bassée from the south, while the British threatened it from the north. La Bassée was and still is the first objective of the Allies in this locality, for until the Germans are driven out of the position no advance can be made to recover possession of the great industrial town of Lille.

CHAPTER XII

May 15th to June 15th

1915

The situation in the Gallipoli Peninsula—Battle of the 4th June—Its abortive results—Increased power of the defensive—Causes of the British failure at Festubert—German attack on the Ypres salient beaten off—Successful French offensives in Artois and on the Aisne—Italy declares war on Austria-Hungary—The Italian Army—Strategical situation discussed—Mackensen's progress in Galicia—Russians evacuate Przemyśl—German artillery preponderance.

In the Gallipoli Peninsula no substantial advance was made by the Allied troops during the month of May, the operations having taken the form of trench warfare, which was carried on under conditions similar to those on other battle-fronts. Directed by their German officers, the Turks used their favourite weapon, the spade, with undoubted success, and converted the ground round the central *point d'appui* of Achi Baba into a veritable field fortress, which could only be subdued by the slow methods of siege operations.

On the night of May 18th the Turks made a determined attack on the Australian and New Zealand troops who were holding a defensive position on the lower slopes of the Saribair ridgeway, the attack being repulsed with a loss to the enemy of 7000 killed and wounded. A few days after the encounter the Turks asked for a truce to bury their dead, when more than 8000 corpses were found on the battlefield. Ten days later the French, operating on the right of the Allies' line, stormed an important redoubt called "Le Haricot," but the Turks regained possession of the work by a counter-attack on the night of June 1st. On the morning of June 4th Sir Ian Hamilton ordered a general attack to be made all along the front in the southern area, the order of battle being as follows. The Indian Division was on the extreme left with its left flank resting on the Ægean coast. Next to the Indians came the 29th Division of Regulars under General Hunter Weston, the Territorial Division prolonging the line as far as General

Paris's Naval Division, which formed the right of the British force, the two French Divisions taking up the line down to the east coast of the peninsula. The battle opened with what General Hamilton described as a "heavy bombardment" by all available guns on shore assisted by the fire of the ships, but the bombardment was not completely effective, for in one spot facing the right of the Indian Division the heavy wire entanglement protecting the Turkish entrenchments was untouched by shells, and the attacking infantry failing to capture this entrenchment the Turks were able to enfilade the advancing troops all along the front as they moved to the assault. In consequence of this nearly all the ground gained in the first rush had to be yielded up to the enemy. The French 2nd Division re-took "Le Haricot" for the fourth time, but were again unable to retain possession of it when the Turks made a counter-attack along the communication trenches which connected the redoubt with their reserves. At the end of the day the net result was only a gain of 500 yards along a front of nearly three miles.

A notable feature of the day's operations was an attempt made by the Australian and New Zealand Corps under General Birdwood to come to the assistance of the southern force by attacking in flank the Turkish reinforcements, which were brought into the fighting line from Maidos. On paper General Birdwood's task seemed easy to accomplish. From Gaba Tepe to Maidos is only four and a half miles, and it would be natural to suppose that a British Corps composed of Australians and New Zealanders, perhaps the best fighting material in the world, would be able to hold up any number of Turkish troops who might try to march along their front; but facing General Birdwood's positions on the Saribair slopes the Turks had constructed a barrier of barbed wire entanglements, and machine-gun pits, which secured the safety of the Maidos-Krithia road along which Turkish troops could come and go as they pleased without molestation. On June 4th General Birdwood tried to force a way through the Turkish lines, but he failed to do so, and his flank attack broke down. Machine guns, magazine rifles, and high explosive hand-grenades have altered the tactical conditions under which battles are now fought and won, the power of the defence being so increased that a single company can hold up an Army Corps.

The lesson to be learnt from this battle of June 4th was the same as that taught at Neuve Chapelle, at Ypres, and at Festubert—the need for an overwhelming mass of guns, expe-

ally of the howitzer type, and for an unlimited supply of high explosive shells. By this means alone trench warfare can be successfully carried on. If men are sent to attack present-day entrenchments before they have been completely battered by artillery fire, they are sent to certain destruction. On the Gallipoli Peninsula, with its circumscribed area which precluded manœuvring, and with its innumerable defensive positions, the difficulties of attack, always considerable, were accentuated in a far greater degree than in an open country like Flanders. It is big batteries which were wanted more than big battalions, and herein lay the significance of the task in front of Mr. Lloyd George. Victory—we know it now—depends as much upon the efforts of our men in workshops at home as upon the courage and skill of our soldiers at the front, not because fighting qualities are of less worth than heretofore, but because those qualities are paralysed for action if the mechanical appliances required for their scope are neither sufficient nor effective.

During the period under review in this chapter (May 15th to June 15th) the situation on the thirty-mile front occupied by Sir John French's Army from Ypres down to the Bethune-La Bassée Canal remained practically unchanged. There was almost continuous local fighting resulting in some slight gains to the British troops south of the Lys river, and in some slight losses north of it, but nothing was done either by our own troops, or by those of the enemy, to alter materially a situation which remained much as it was in October 1914 when the British Army was transferred from the Aisne to Flanders. The stalemate continued.

Certain tactical operations took place, however, which require notice for other than strategical reasons. The chief of these was the British offensive on the line Richebourg L'Avoué-Festubert (see the map in Chapter XI), which, as explained in that chapter, began on May 16th, and was continued with considerable success during the 17th, when it gradually worked itself out owing to the supply of ammunition being unable to keep pace with the demand. Many valuable lives were lost in this operation, and a vast number of shells were fired away, but so far as could be ascertained from the reports of Sir John French there was not more of a gain than 1200 yards at most along a front of two miles. Two attacks were made along the front indicated, one from Richebourg at 11.30 p.m. on the night of May 15th, and a second from Festubert at 3 a.m. on the 16th, the German trenches having

been subjected to a continuous artillery fire for some days previous to the beginning of the operation. The attack from Richebourg was not wholly successful, as the enemy were prepared for it. On the left the British advance was checked almost immediately, but on the right the assaulting troops gained possession of the German first-line trenches without heavy loss, and subsequently established themselves in the second-line trenches, the gain of ground in this locality amounting to some 600 yards on a front of 800 yards. The Festubert attack was more successful, our troops carrying three lines of German trenches along a front of some 1200 yards, and then penetrating for nearly three-quarters of a mile in rear of the enemy's position. The Germans were taken by surprise, and some hundred or more surrendered, the prisoners testifying to the heavy damage done by our artillery fire during the bombardment which preceded the attack.

The result of this day's battle was to drive two wedges into the enemy's lines, one in front of Richebourg, and the other of Festubert, the intervening space of some 1000 yards being left in German possession. The positions in this space were attacked next day, but without success. Some slight progress was made north of La Quinque Rue, but by the evening of the 17th the situation was much as it was on the night of the 16th, and as it has remained ever since.

In describing the battle of the 17th the "Eye Witness" with Sir John French's headquarters remarked as follows: "The enemy's breastworks were well armed with machine guns behind steel shields, which could only be destroyed by high explosive shells." It is regrettable that the lack of the necessary shell should have prevented the destruction of these breastworks before the infantry were sent against them. In his dispatch of April 5th dealing with the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, Sir John French laid great stress on the necessity for having an unlimited supply of ammunition at the disposal of his artillery commanders, and it came as a revelation to the country that in spite of the Field-Marshal's representations two months after the battle he should have had to fight another action without sufficient munitions. On March 15th Lord Kitchener sounded a note of alarm when he told the House of Lords that he had "unfortunately found that the output of our factories and workshops did not come up to expectation, for a very large number of orders had not been completed by the date on which they were promised." This statement opened the eyes of the nation to a sense of its

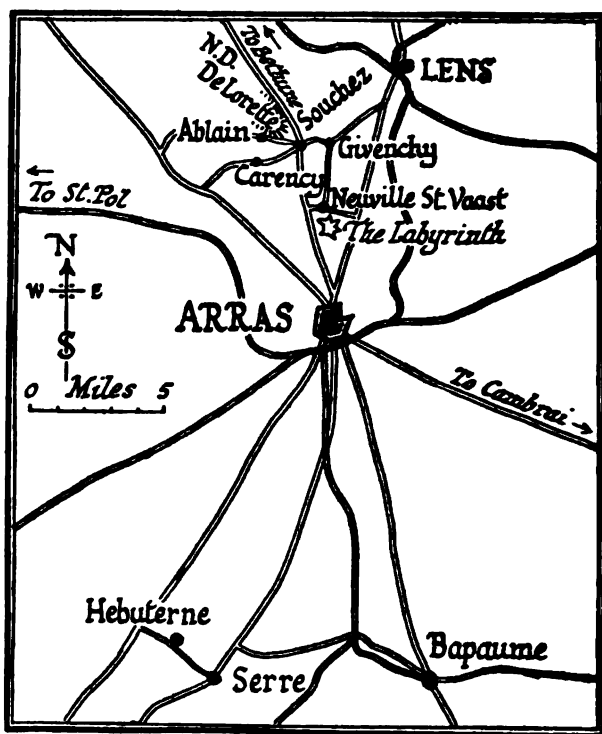
responsibility for the conduct of the war, and after some delay led to the formation of a new Government, and the appointment of a Minister of Munitions, who was held responsible for supplying the War Department with the material it required. The only regret is, that the matter was not taken in hand before, as ought to have been done immediately after Sir John French's warning.

Baffled for many months before Ypres, the Germans still kept their eyes fixed on the salient, which has been the scene of so many bloody encounters, and at 8 a.m. on May 24th, taking advantage of the wind, which had veered round to the north, they launched one of their asphyxiating gas attacks, both from shells and cylinders, which had been brought up in great numbers, and placed in position along the front between Wieltje and Hooge, north-east and east of Ypres. The attack had evidently been prepared with great care, and of its kind the most formidable yet attempted. "The amount of gas used," wrote Sir John French in his report of May 25th, "was greater than on any previous occasion. Over a front of five miles gas was emitted from cylinders throughout a period of four and a half hours, and at the same time our line was bombarded with asphyxiating shells. The gas cloud rose in places forty feet above the ground." In most places our troops, provided with respirators, maintained their positions, but in certain sections they had to evacuate their trenches to avoid suffocation. After the Germans had given time for the gas to take effect they launched their infantry attack, and succeeded in gaining a footing in our lines near Wieltje, and for some distance astride of the Roulers railroad; but most of the ground lost was recovered by counter-attacks, and the German advance was effectively stopped. It was interesting to hear from the Field-Marshal that "our men have demonstrated that with due precautions this form of attack can be met and defeated."

With the exception of this attack, which failed, no fighting on a big scale took place in the Ypres region after the three weeks' battle which began on April 22nd and ended on May 14th. There were continuous desultory encounters—notably one at the Château of Hooge between May 29th and June 3rd, in which the 8rd Dragoon Guards took so conspicuous a part; but no organised attack with a definite strategical purpose took place on either side of the opposing line. If the battles described above had no other result they at least confirmed the ascendancy which British troops established over

the Germans. When successes were won by the enemy they were due, not to superiority of fighting power, but to the use made of those diabolical contrivances for carrying on war, to the perfection and multiplication of which the Germans have devoted unceasing effort for the past forty years.

Turning now to our French Allies, we find that they could



point to a series of uninterrupted local successes in various sectors of the front occupied, and notably on the line Notre Dame de Lorette-Souchez-Neuville St. Vaast (see sketch).

On May 21st the French Division, which captured Carencoy on the 9th, attacked and carried the fortified spur of Notre Dame de Lorette, which dominates the whole of the surrounding country, and from the summit of which French troops could look down on Lens, which is five miles to the east of their advanced lines. The Lorette position is the key to the

actical situation in this part of the front, and had been so strongly fortified by the Germans as to be considered by them as impregnable. The fortifications were defended with great obstinacy, but the French guns were too much for the defenders, and when the infantry assault was delivered 8000 dead Germans were found in the trenches, while 1000 or more prisoners fell into French hands. The fall of Lorette and its occupation by the French artillery made the village of Ablain untenable, and on May 28th the French assaulted and carried it without great difficulty, 500 more prisoners and a quantity of war *matériel* falling into their hands. The French then followed up their success by beginning an attack on what is known as the "Labyrinth," a fortified position south-east of Neuville St. Vaast, which had been converted into a veritable field fortress. A footing was gained in this stronghold on the first day of the attack, and step by step the French drove the enemy out of a place which is the last formidable obstacle between their lines and the Lens-Arras railway.

On June 7th the Germans were finally driven from the village of Neuville St. Vaast, to which they clung so long with such persistent tenacity. On June 1st the sugar factory west of Souchez on the Carency road was taken from the Germans, and on the 12th the Souchez railway station was seized, the village being then threatened from west, south, and east. If we look at the sketch on the opposite page we see the significance of these successes, which cleared the way for a future advance on Lens. It was unfortunate that, owing to the reasons stated, Sir John French had been unable to extend his operations north of the La Bassée Canal, for his co-operation at the time under review would have had a powerful effect on the French offensive south of the canal.

Further down the front about twelve miles south-west of Arras on June 7th the French made a surprise attack on the German trenches between Hebuterne and Serre. The attack was preceded by a two hours' bombardment, which prepared the way for the infantry, who carried two lines of the enemy's trenches, capturing 400 prisoners, whose retreat had been cut off by the French guns. Next day the Germans, anxious to recover the lost ground, brought up reinforcements in motor cars, but the French had secured possession of the captured trenches, and the German attack was repulsed with the loss of 2000 dead. The French advance at this point was about 1000 yards in depth, along a front of 1200 yards.

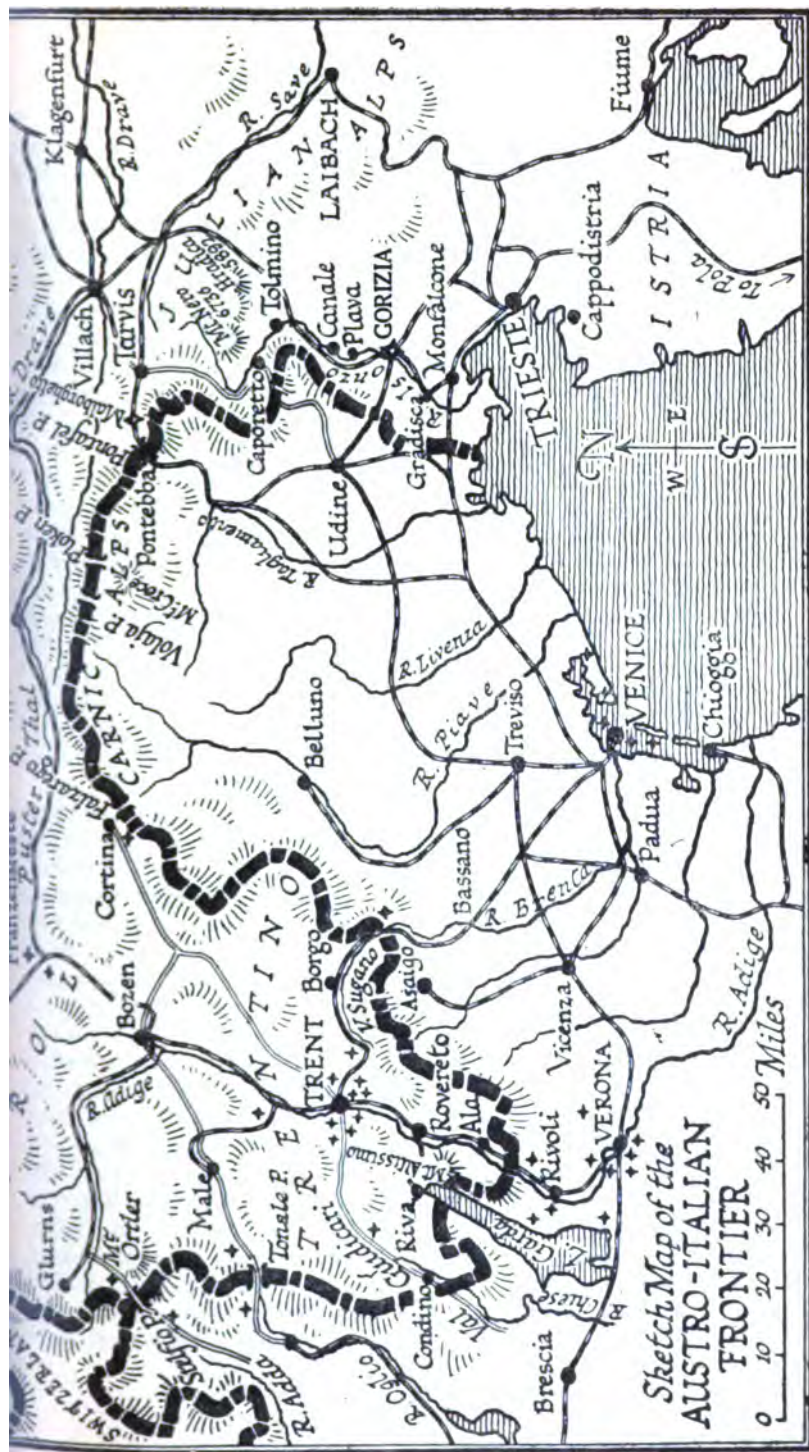
On June 6th the French had another success north of the

Aisne, about eight miles south-east of Noyon, where they made an unexpected attack on the German trenches at Guennevières, two miles east of Tracy le Mont, capturing two lines of trenches, and taking 200 prisoners. These successes, giving no great gain of ground, were none the less highly encouraging, as they showed that our French Allies were able to beat the Germans on their own chosen ground, and turn them out of the entrenchments which they had spent eight months in fortifying. Brave, however, as the French infantry are in attack, their successes would not have been possible without the aid of that incomparable artillery, which is admittedly superior in technical power to that of the enemy.

The advent of Italy¹ into the war arena opened up a new theatre of war, and one of historical interest, for the country over which General Cadorna's armies were about to operate was the scene of Napoleon's famous campaign of 1797, when he sent Joubert up the Adige to hold the Austrians in the Tyrol, while he took his main army up the Isonzo river through the gap of Tarvis, and threatened Vienna from the valley of the Drave. It may be that history will repeat itself, and that General Cadorna will follow the same plan of campaign as that which his great predecessor carried out with such conspicuous success.

Without going into a lengthened description of Italian Army organisation, it may be said that there were rather more than 8,000,000 men between the ages of twenty and forty who were available to be called up when the order for mobilisation was issued on May 28rd. About 1,200,000 of these men had been fully trained for two years with the colours, 800,000 partially trained, while the remaining million had been given no training at all, their drill beginning directly they report themselves. For the organisation of these men there were twelve territorial recruiting districts, each district furnishing one first-line Army Corps, 50,000 strong, a duplicate corps being formed as soon as the first-line troops were sent to their concentration rendezvous. This gave a strength of twelve first-line corps with four Cavalry Divisions, and twelve second-line corps with two Cavalry Divisions—twenty-four corps in all, with something like 8000 guns. The twelve first-line corps, 600,000 strong, were organised in four armies, each of 150,000 men, and these armies probably reached their rendezvous about

¹ The mobilisation of the Italian Army was ordered on the 22nd May, and on the following day Italy declared war on Austria.



the middle of June or soon after. The other corps were available to follow in the course of a few weeks. These corps were exclusive of the frontier guard troops—the famous “Alpini” and “Guardie di Finanza”—who are always maintained in a state of semi-mobilisation, and who seized the Trentino Passes directly war was declared. As the twenty-four corps mentioned above only absorbed, with line of communication troops, some 1,500,000 men out of the 3,000,000 available, it is probable that reserve divisions were at once formed, there being more than sufficient mobilised men for making good the wastage in the field armies.

The sketch map accompanying this Chapter shows the whole length of the Austro-Italian frontier from where it leaves the Swiss frontier near Monte Ortler, down to where it reaches the Gulf of Trieste between the Tagliamento and Isonzo rivers. The international boundary is traced along the lower slopes of the mountain ranges, which encircle the Italian plain, and gives the watersheds and passes over them in all cases to the Austrians. Under normal conditions this part of the Italian frontier is indefensible, and had the Austrian Army facing the Italian frontier been in a position to take the offensive when war was declared, the Italians would have been obliged to have remained on the defensive in their plains without having the option of carrying the war into the enemy's country. The Tyrol juts out like a huge bastion into the Venetian plain, and, among other advantages which this confers on Austria, it enables her troops inside the bastion to act on interior lines, and divides the northern provinces of Italy into two separate sections. If Italy had no other motive in going to war with Austria than a rectification of her frontier her decision to do so is fully justified on the grounds of strategical expediency, for under existing frontier conditions her territory lies at the mercy of Austria-Hungary.

There are two main trunk lines of road and railway leading out of Italy on this side of her frontier, one going through the centre of the Tyrol up the Adige river to the Brenner Pass, from where it descends into the valley of the Inn. This is the highway from Italy to Bavaria. The second route goes between the Carnic and Julian Alps over the Pontafel Pass to Tarvis at the head of the Save River, and from there reaches the valley of the Drave at Villach, whence the road lies open to Vienna. There are other subsidiary routes leading to and from the Po basin over the mountains, but they all converge on these two main thoroughfares, one going to Germany and the other to

Austria. There is a third outlet south of the Julian Alps leading through Trieste to the Dalmatian coast, but this is removed from the centre of strategical interest, which for the purposes of the war will be focused on the two above-mentioned routes, by means of which the rival military forces will come into tactical contact.

Turning again to the map, it will be seen that these two trunk roads are connected laterally by the railway which traverses the Puster Thal, or Drave valley, from Franzensfeste to Villach. These two places are obviously important strategical railway junctions, and are both strongly fortified. If the Italians can succeed in reaching the Puster Thal, and seizing the railway, they will isolate the enemy's forces on the Adige from those operating on the Isonzo river. The valley of the Adige, which is for the most part a narrow defile, is strongly fortified the whole way from Franzenfeste down to Trent, where the Austrians have constructed a formidable entrenched camp, while on the other side the approaches to the Drave valley are blocked by a series of defensive works extending from the Pontafel Pass to Villach, which is also strongly fortified. Facing Trent is the entrenched camp of Verona, which is a great *place d'armes*, and is the headquarters of the 5th Italian Corps. This is Italy's offensive base for a movement up the Adige river, and her defensive base for an attack coming down it.

The Isonzo river has always been regarded as the first line of Austrian defence from an invasion coming across the Italian frontier, and until this line has been forced, and the enemy decisively defeated, no advance can be made either northwards to the Drave, or south to Trieste. The central pivot of the river defences is Gorizia, which is surrounded with outlying forts armed with the latest guns from the Skoda factory. The capture of Gorizia, which has now been accomplished, cuts Trieste off from railway communication with the interior except through Laibach, and its subjugation was the first objective of the Italian Army.

Immediately after the declaration of war the Italians took steps to secure possession of the Trentino Passes, and this they did with great promptitude, and with effective results. The entrances to the Stelvio and Tonale Passes were forthwith seized, while in the Val Giudicaria Italian troops made their way as far as Condino. East of Lake Garda the Italians occupied Monte Altissimo, and seized the Austrian frontier town of Ala. Further up on the east side of the Trentino

bastion they pushed an advance guard up the Brenta as far as Borgo, and thus secured possession of all the main outlets from the Adige valley. On the Carnic frontier they occupied Cortina during the last week in May, and subsequently seized the Sassi Pass on the Dolomite road, while further east they captured the position of Preikoffel, which dominates the Plöken, or as it is more commonly called, the Monte Croce Pass. In this direction their objective was clearly the Puster Thal, and the Austrians knew it, for they put up a strong resistance to Italian progress northwards, both in the region of the Plöken Pass and at Cortina. The bombardment with heavy artillery of the fortified station of Malborghetto on the eastern side of the Pontafel Pass showed that General Cadorna has his eye on Tarvis, which is what might be expected from what has already been said in this article.

While these operations were full of interest and importance, it was known that General Cadorna's main effort would be made across the Isonzo river, behind which the bulk of the Italian Army was concentrated early in June. Italian posts were established all along the right bank of the Isonzo, and the day following the declaration of war a force seized Caporetto, and on the next day occupied the dominating height of Monte Nero, overlooking the Austrian town of Tolmino. Canale, north of Gorz, and Gradisca, south of it, were both occupied, while on the Adriatic coast road the Italians advanced to Monfalcone, where they were within eighteen miles of Trieste.

Italy thus made a good start by securing positions of advantage which gave her firm stepping-off places for ulterior operations. General Cadorna began the campaign cautiously by feeling his way with frontier troops and advanced guards. He was well aware that the campaign would be fought over difficult ground lending itself to defence rather than to attack, and precluding the possibility of rapid offensive movements; but the Italian Army started in fine fighting form, with the whole nation behind its back. Never was a war undertaken under more hopeful conditions and with better antecedent assurances of success.

May and June 1915 were bad months for our Russian Allies. Ever since April 28th, when General Mackensen swooped down so unexpectedly on the 8rd Russian Army defending the line of the Dunajec river, the Russians met with a series of nearly unbroken reverses, which compelled the Grand Duke

Nicholas to withdraw his armies, first from one position, then from another, till nearly the whole of the territory conquered last September was won back by the enemy.

In Chapter XI it was shown how the Grand Duke had rallied his armies on the line of the lower San and upper Dniester, and there was then every reason to think that he would succeed in holding this new 250-mile line of defence against any force which could be brought against it. Strategically the line was a strong one, its right resting on the Vistula, its left on neutral territory, while the entrenched camp of Przemyśl thrust into the enemy's lines in the form of a powerful fortified enclave served as a central *point d'appui*, from which it seemed possible to strike at the Austro-German communications if any attempt was made to force a passage across either of the two waterways along which the Russian Armies were deployed.

In spite of the strength of this line the Russians failed to hold it. Mackensen, who personally directed the Austro-German offensive movement from its first inception, with a correct appreciation of the situation confronting him, determined to break through the Russian centre at Przemyśl, and then by threatening Lemberg force the Grand Duke to give up the Dniester line, and withdraw his armies behind the Bug. With this purpose he ordered demonstrations to be made all along the Dniester in order to draw away the Russian troops from the centre, where he concentrated astride of the Jaroslav-Tarnow railway ten German Corps composed of what remained of the flower of the German Army. Among other troops comprising the corps were the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the Prussian Guard, the 10th Corps, the 41st Reserve Corps, and two Divisions of selected *élite* troops taken from various corps in the west. These ten corps were massed in close formation, one behind the other, and formed a phalanx of such colossal size and weight as to be practically irresistible when loss of life is of no consideration. On May 24th this phalanx was sent across the San between Sieniawa and Jaroslav, but suffered so severely on its way that the Russians succeeded in holding up its advance on the Lubaczowka river, where indecisive trench fighting went on for more than a fortnight. On May 25th the 6th Austrian Corps also crossed the San at Radymno, midway between Sieniawa and Przemyśl, and attempted to march up the Wisnia river to Mosciska, while Mackensen completed the investment of Przemyśl on three sides by detaching a force to attack the northern forts.

The forts held out till June 2nd, when the Grand Duke informed us that the "last shell was spent," and that General Ivanoff had given orders for the evacuation of the place. At 8.30 a.m. on June 3rd the celebrated fortress fell once more into Austrian hands.

In anticipation of the time when the ammunition supply would be exhausted the Russians had either destroyed or carried off all serviceable guns and war material before evacuating Przemyśl, which was only the "shadow" of a fortress when retaken. No booty was left behind, and no prisoners were taken. None the less the fall of the place was a heavy blow to the Russian cause, and to any other army than the Russian would have been an irreparable one. As it was, the Russians treated the disaster with their customary *sang-froid*, regarding it as a regrettable incident, but not as one which would affect the ultimate fate of the war. Strategically, the fortress in its dismantled condition had ceased to have any value, but its fall released the investing troops, and removed a menace to the enemy's communications.

The Germans were not allowed to have it all their own way, for on May 27th General Irmanoff with the 3rd Caucasian Corps, which had been holding the line of the lower San from its junction with the Vistula down to Rudnik, crossed the river at the latter place, captured Sieniawa, and threw the enemy back behind the Leg river, which is shown on the sketch, but without a name, as flowing into the Vistula at Sandomierz. This movement aimed at the enemy's communications was immediately checked by Mackensen, who brought up his reserve troops by rail, and compelled Irmanoff to re-cross the river.

Meanwhile General Linsingen with the original German Army, which had fought so desperately round Kosiova, moved down the valley of the Stryj, and seized the town of that name on May 31st. This success was followed up on June 5th by the capture of the bridge-head at Zurawno, where next day a large part of Linsingen's troops crossed to the left bank of the river, and turned their faces towards Lemberg. On this day the Galician capital was being threatened with a converging attack by Mackensen marching down the Lubaczowka, by Marwitz moving along the Przemyśl-Lemberg railway, by Böhm-Ermolli from the direction of Hussakow, and by Linsingen, who was given control over the whole movement against the Dniester line from the Tysmienica river down to the Bystrzyca. Further down the Dniester General Pflanzer-

Baltin with an Austrian force reached the river between Niezwiska and Zaleszczyki, but his operations were too far removed from the scene of central interest to have much influence on the strategical situation.

The Grand Duke perceived his danger, and met it with his usual decision. Concentrating against General Linsingen, he attacked that General on June 8th, and after a three-days' battle drove him across the Dniester with great loss—15,000 prisoners and a quantity of war material being left in Russian hands. June 10th was a red letter day for the Russian Army, which was successful in a series of engagements all along the line of the Dniester, while on the Przemyśl-Lemberg railway a strong attack by General Marvitz was thrown back from Mosciska with heavy loss. It looked as though the tide had turned in favour of the Russians, but in strengthening his left to defeat Linsingen the Grand Duke appears to have weakened his right wing, which was covering Lemberg on the west, and on June 18th Mackensen, always alert and ready to pounce, began a fresh attack with reinforced troops on a forty-mile front extending from Pishorowice down to Mosciska. The Russians, after "a most obstinate resistance," then gave way, and fell back on the prepared defensive position north and south of Grodek, about ten miles west of Lemberg, further events being reserved for another chapter.

The primary cause of the German success in Galicia was the numerical superiority of the German over the Russian artillery. It was reported that between them the Germans and Austrians together brought as many as 4000 guns into the field on a front which was often not more than sixty miles, while the Russians had not more than a third of this number. If the contest had been one between infantry alone the result would never have been doubtful, but without guns and the necessary supply of ammunition the rifle and bayonet are powerless to achieve success. The fire of the enemy's guns decided the fate of the battles before ever the infantry advanced. This was the lesson which the first year of the war had to teach, and the Russians, like ourselves, lost no time in applying it.

Whatever shortcomings there may have been in Russian preparations for war, there can be only one opinion about the splendid fighting qualities of our Allies, who after suffering a series of disasters refused to be beaten, and were just as determined as we were to continue the struggle till victory crowned their efforts. The Russian soldier is always seen at his best after a reverse.

CHAPTER XIII

June 15th to July 18th

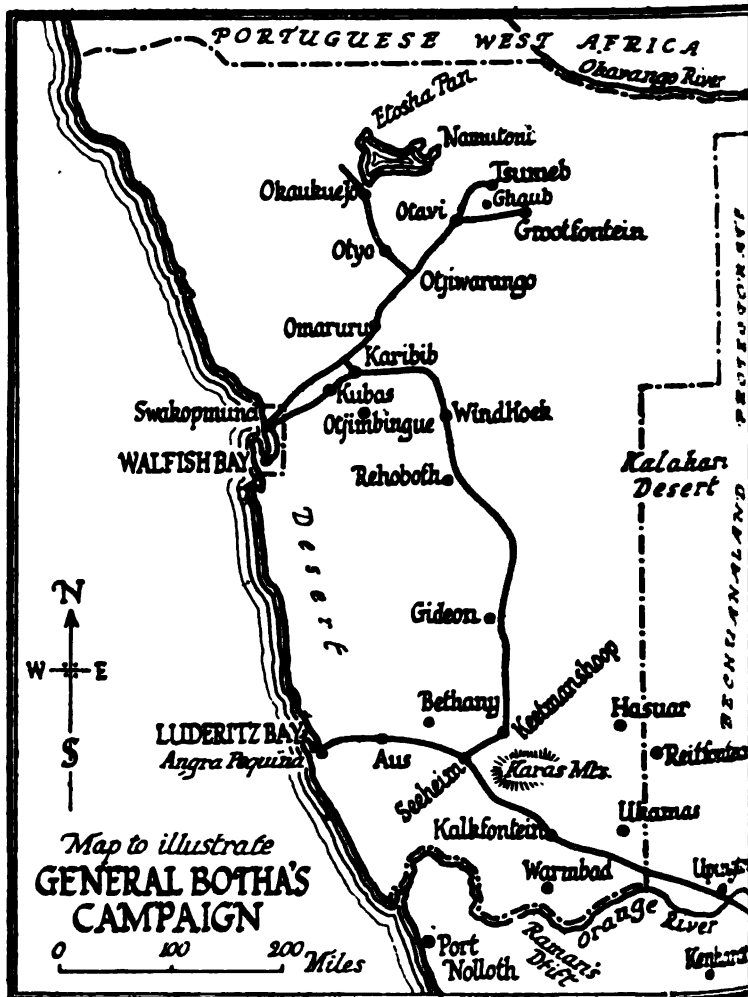
1915

General Botha's campaign in Damaraland—Sir John French's account of the second Battle of Ypres—German use of asphyxiating gas—Use of gas forbidden by the Hague Convention—Operations in the Gallipoli Peninsula—Italian campaign—Evolution of General Cadorna's plans—Recrudescence of German offensive in the west—Its abortive results—Mackensen continues his march through Galicia—Reoccupation of Lemberg—Mackensen changes front—His advance northwards—Hindenburg's movement towards the Narew—Warsaw in danger.

THE campaign in Damaraland deserves the first place in this chapter, if only for the political consequences which resulted from General Botha's successful strategy. In the short space of five months 822,348 square miles of German territory—nearly three times the size of the United Kingdom—were added to the British Empire. There has been no declaration of annexation, but it is recognised by common consent that the newly won territory will eventually be incorporated in the Union of South Africa, and a benevolent administration will henceforward replace the harsh government of German officials.

General Botha conducted the campaign to a decisive end under difficulties which would have disheartened a less resolute commander. Invited by the Imperial Government to send an expedition into the German Protectorate, which has been for so long a thorn in the side of the Union, the General, who enjoyed the advantage of being both Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, was busy preparing the necessary force for the purpose of his campaign when he was suddenly confronted with two local rebellions, both inspired by German intrigue: one led by the two rebel leaders, Kemp and Maritz, who conducted their operations from German territory; the other by De Wet and Beyers, who raised the flag of revolt in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. The suppression of these rebellions delayed the departure of the Expeditionary

Force, but General Botha lost no time in putting them both down with a strong hand. Beyers was drowned, De Wet captured, and Kemp compelled to surrender on February 2d.



after being badly defeated by General Van de Venter when he was attempting a raid on Uppington. While operations against the rebels were in progress Major-General Sir Duncan Mackenzie was sent to occupy Luderitz Bay, which will

ture be known as Angra Pequena, and though he was restrained to await the arrival of the forces detailed to co-operate with him he pushed a reconnaissance up the Keetmanshoop railway as far as Aus (see map). Walfisch Bay, which had been seized by the Germans a few days after the declaration of war, was reoccupied on Christmas Day, while defensive posts were at the same time established at all the lifts over the Orange river.

The campaign began in earnest at the beginning of February 1915, and continued without any serious hitch till the final surrender of what remained of the German force under Colonel Rank on July 9th, General Botha's plan of operations being in order. He himself with the Northern Force was to land at Swakopmund, and move up the railway to Windhoek, the capital of the Protectorate, while three other columns, one operating from Angra Pequena under General Mackenzie, another from the Orange river under Brigadier-General Van der Venter, and a third under Colonel Berrange, based on Kimberley, were to form a Southern Force, which after reaching Keetmanshoop by converging routes was to be placed under command of General Smuts, the Minister of Defence in the Union Government. The details of the Expeditionary Force have not yet been published, but its total strength is believed not to have exceeded 15,000, the greater part of the force being composed of mounted troops organised in small handy brigades under young commanders. The enemy's force did not exceed 10,000 men, of whom between 5000 and 6000 were Germans. It was always intended to bring this force up to full war strength by reinforcing it with German reservists from South America, but as soon as war was declared our fleet took charge of the seas, and cut Damaraland off from all communication with the outer world.

The movements were carried out as ordered. After some delay Brigadier-General Van der Venter occupied Warmbad on April 8th, struck the railway at Kalkfontein on the 5th, and there divided his force into two mobile columns, one moving west, and the other east, of the Karas Mountains. The western column reached Seeheim on April 18th, and was joined there by General Mackenzie's advanced guard, while the eastern column occupied Keetmanshoop on the 20th, linking up a few days later with Colonel Berrange's troops, who reached the rendezvous *via* Hasuar. General Smuts arrived on the 20th, but after the occupation of Keetmanshoop the southern force was broken up into detachments, and he then went back to

Cape Town. Hearing that the Germans had retreated to Gideon, General Mackenzie took a couple of brigades across country from Aus to endeavour to surround them, and cut them off from Windhoek. He reached Gideon on the 28th, and fought a successful engagement, which ended in the dispersion of the enemy's troops, some of whom were captured, while the remainder got away to Windhoek. Meanwhile General Botha had landed at Swakopmund on February 12th, and after fighting a considerable action at Trekkopjes, some sixty miles up the railway, he advanced under great difficulties, clearing the country on both sides of the line, till he reached Karibib on May 5th. What delayed his advance more than any other cause was the poisoning of the wells by the Germans, necessitating the water supply for the troops being carried along with them. After seizing the railway junction at Karibib Botha, on July 12th, reached Windhoek, which surrendered without resistance, the wireless station in the town having been left intact by the Germans, who retired in a northerly direction without attempting to dispute the entry of the British troops.

Then there was a lull in the operations for about a month owing to the necessity for recuperating the strength of the troops after their arduous work, and for organising the civil administration of the conquered territory. While this was being done a flying force was concentrated at Karibib, consisting of a central column, which was to march along the railway to Otavi, flanked by a western and eastern column, each composed of two mounted brigades, the former under Brigadier-General Britz, and the latter under Brigadier-General Myburgh, their orders being to clear the country west and east of the railway, and surround the Germans who had fallen back to Otavi. On June 15th General Botha set this force in motion, occupying Omaruru on the 21st, and Otjiwarango on the 26th. From there he sent Britz by a long detour through Otjo to occupy Namutoni at the eastern extremity of the Etosha Lake, while Brigadier-General Myburgh was ordered to clear the country east of the railway, and seize the railhead at Tsumeb. The enveloping movement was completely successful. Otavi was occupied on July 1st by General Manie Botha, Namutoni on the 6th, and Tsumeb by General Myburgh on the 7th. Finding he was headed on the north, and his retreat cut off east and west, Colonel Frank had no alternative left but to surrender, and this he did on July 9th, 204 officers and 3293 men falling into General Botha's hands, along with 87 field and 22 machine guns.

SIR JOHN FRENCH'S DESPATCH OF JULY 12TH 1907

Thus ended a campaign which reflects the highest credit on the General who planned it, and on the troops who conducted the operations under his executive direction. When we consider the distance covered, the difficult nature of the country traversed, the greater part of which was waterless desert constantly visited by sand storms, the poisoned wells, the excessive heat, the scanty communications, the precision with which the movements of the various columns were co-ordinated, and the dramatic conclusion of the operations, it is no exaggeration to say that so brilliant a piece of work has rarely been equalled, and never surpassed, in the history of desert warfare. General Botha has confirmed his reputation as a leader of a very high order, and has deserved well of the Empire.

In the western theatre of war the period covered by this chapter (June 15th to July 15th) was comparatively uneventful along the British front. There was some desultory fighting round Ypres, and an almost continuous artillery duel, but no organised attack was undertaken, and all that Sir John French was concerned to do was to hold his ground till he had been sufficiently reinforced in men and munitions to resume the offensive.

The Field-Marshal's despatch covering the period between April 5th and June 15th was published on July 12th, and though it took us over old ground it contained much that was new, or at any rate which was officially made known for the first time. Among other items of information Sir John French incidentally announced the replacement of General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien by General Sir Herbert Plumer in command of the 2nd British Army. The reasons for this step were not stated, but whatever they were, the retirement of General Smith-Dorrien from the fighting line was one of the most regrettable of those too numerous personal episodes which have disfigured the conduct of the war both in the military and political world. On his public form Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien has shown himself to be an officer of resource and ability, and there was no other General of his standing who enjoyed the confidence of the men in the trenches to the same extent as he did. In South Africa he acquired a high reputation for fighting characteristics when he led the famous 19th Brigade with such continuous success during Lord Roberts's march to Pretoria, and owing to his reputation as a tactician he was chosen in 1907 to succeed Sir John French in command of the Aldershot Army Corps when the Field-Marshal was appointed

are now. In spite, however, of the loss of ground due to the cause mentioned, the Ypres salient, as it now exists, is much more defensible than it was previous to April 22nd. The semi-circular line has been straightened out till it stretches from Hill 60 to Pilkeln, in nearly direct prolongation of the French line, which links up with the position of the Belgian Army on the west bank of the Yser Canal. If it were not for the bad moral effect which would result from giving up ground which we have fought so hard and victoriously to keep, the right thing to do would be to place the Ypres Canal between ourselves and the enemy, but in war moral count for more than material forces, and it is often better to hold on to a bad tactical position than retreat to a good one.

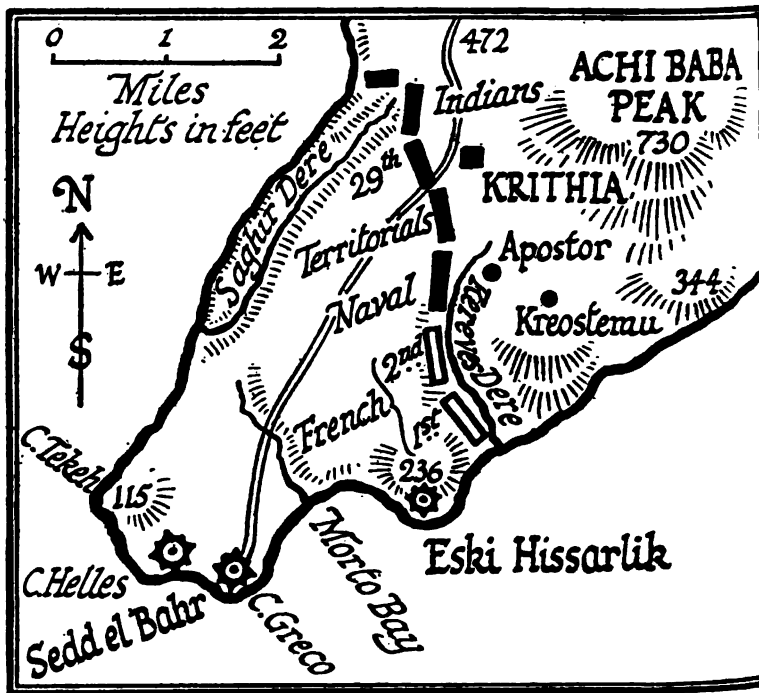
In the course of his despatch Sir John French alluded to the arrival of the first instalment of New Army troops, and he then went on to express his satisfaction with what he had seen of them. "The units appear to be thoroughly well officered and commanded. The equipment is in good order and efficient. Several units of artillery have been tested in the firing line behind the trenches, and I hear very good reports of them. Their shooting has been extremely good, and they are quite fit to take their places in the line." This was encouraging, and a testimony to the thoroughness of the work done during the first year of the war by those who were entrusted with the training of the New Armies. Not less encouraging was the Field-Marshal's appreciation of the services of those Territorial Divisions which joined his army during April and May, and which covered themselves with glory in the offensive and defensive operations reported in his despatch. It is important to note that these divisions were at the time under review able to take their place as complete army units, instead of being broken up with their various units detached for fighting purposes among divisions of the Regular Army. "In whatever kind of work these units have been engaged they have all borne an active and distinguished part, and have proved themselves thoroughly reliable and efficient." The Territorial Force, with its admirable recruiting machinery, and expansive organisation, has fulfilled all the expectations of Lord Haldane, to whom is due the credit of having brought the Force into existence.

The preceding chapter carried the record of the war in the Dardanelles up to June 4th, on which day Sir Ian Hamilton ordered a general attack to be made on the Turkish positions covering the village of Krithia, and the fortified position of

Achi Baba. The attack, as was explained, and for the reasons given, was not wholly successful, but it ended in a salient being driven into the Turkish centre, and though no progress was made on the flanks, the way was prepared for straightening out the line as afterwards took place. On June 21st General Gouraud began to do this by attacking the formidable system of trenches overlooking the Kereves Dere ravine. After a fierce fight the 2nd French Division captured all the first and second line trenches opposite their front, and stormed the famous Haricot redoubt, which had given so much trouble during the battle of June 4th. The 1st French Division was even more heavily engaged on the extreme right, but eventually succeeded in winning and holding against a series of determined counter-attacks all the positions which General Gouraud had ordered them to capture. Then there was a lull in the operations till June 28th, when Sir Ian Hamilton ordered the attack to be continued, his intention on this occasion being to threaten the Turkish position at Krithia by advancing his left wing west and east of the Saghir Dere ravine, which runs nearly parallel to the Aegean coast, and about a mile inland. The battle opened with a combined artillery bombardment by French and British guns, assisted by the fire of the *Talbot*, *Scorpion*, and *Wolverine*. The bombardment was longer and more effective than that on June 4th, the wire entanglements in front of the Turkish trenches being completely destroyed, and the trenches themselves so shattered that when the men of the Indian and 29th Divisions rushed forward to attack they had a comparatively easy task. West of Saghir Dere, where the Turkish trenches had been exposed to the naval gun fire, the Indians captured three lines of trenches, with little opposition, many of the Turkish soldiers being found buried in the *débris*, while those who remained were taken prisoners. East of the ravine the Royal Scots made a fine attack, capturing two lines of trenches assigned to them, but further to their right the remaining battalions of their brigade met with a check. Meanwhile the Gurkhas, pressing along the Saghir Dere, captured a commanding knoll directly west of Krithia, the final result of the day's fighting being a gain of 1000 yards, while the left wing was thrown forward so as to face east instead of north. The sketch on the next page shows the position of the Allied forces on the night of June 28th.

In order to support the main attack on Krithia Sir William Birdwood, commanding the Australian and New Zealand Division, was directed to make a demonstration along the Sari

Bair ridgeway towards the Maidos-Krithia road, so as to prevent the Turks reinforcing their army defending Achi Baba. This order was carried out, but there was no gain of ground, as the Turks, apprehensive for their communications, had assembled in great force at this point. The Turkish defeat on June 28th alarmed the Constantinople Government, and Enver Pasha hurried down to the scene of operations to try and put fresh life into Turkish resistance. On arrival he ordered a general



counter-attack to be made with the object of recovering the lost ground, and this was launched on July 4th, when after a violent bombardment two divisions of Turkish infantry were sent forward in mass formation after the German fashion against the positions held by the 29th and Naval Divisions. The attack made no impression on the British troops, who easily repulsed it, inflicting enormous loss on the enemy. Following up the success gained on June 28th with his left wing, Sir Ian Hamilton directed the Naval Division, working in co-operation with the two French divisions, to push forward the right and right centre



[To face page 171.

f the Allied line in pursuance of his ultimate plan, which was to envelop the Achi Baba position. After two days' severe fighting the whole line was advanced some 400 yards, the 1st French Division succeeded in occupying the lower valley of the Kereves stream on the extreme right, the losses of the enemy again being very heavy.

By the end of June General Cadorna had deployed the whole of the Italian 3rd Army on the right bank of the Isonzo between Tolmino and Monfalcone, and he then proceeded to carry out a vigorous offensive in order to gain a secure footing on the left bank—an antecedent condition of further operations eastwards. Italian troops crossed the river at five different points, Caporetto, Plava, Castelnuovo, Gradisca, and Monfalcone. Considering the immense strength of the Austrian defences, General Cadorna and his brave troops may be congratulated on having made a good start. Along the thirty-mile front from Tolmino to the sea there was a continuous wall of defensive works flanked on the north by the fortified position of Tolmino, and on the south by the formidable Carso plateau, while Gorizia constituted a central Austrian *point d'appui*, having been converted into a modern fortress with a girdle of exterior forts supplemented by advanced batteries provided with armoured cars on which the latest types of heavy howitzers were mounted. All that destructive science could do to render this iron barrier impassable was done, and it was evident that the Italians would have a hard struggle to break through it into Austria.

While regular siege operations were being carried on against Tolmino and Gorizia the Italians were putting forth great efforts to secure possession of the Carso plateau, which dominates the rail and carriage road between Monfalcone and Trieste, as well as the Isonzo valley up to Gorizia. The plateau must be completely subjugated before any advance can be made along the coast road into Istria, and before Gorizia can be attacked from the south. On July 18th the Italians, who were already in possession of the bridge-head at Sagrado, stormed with great gallantry several lines of trenches on the summit of the western face of the plateau, and captured 2000 prisoners with a large quantity of war material. Then they followed up this success by an infantry attack supported by a large number of heavy and field guns. Further north another army began to operate against Tarvis along two routes, one of which goes over the Pontafel Pass, and is traversed by the Venice-Vienna railway,

while the other is the coach road leading from Plezzo over the Predil Pass to the Save valley. The progress of the Italian columns along the railway route was checked at Malborghetto (see map in Chapter XII), where the Austrians had constructed a chain of forts, which have not yet been subdued, while along the coach road an equally strong group of forts covering the Predil Pass had to be captured before the way was clear to Tarvis. A further offensive was directed across the Carnic Alps by way of the Kreuzberg Pass down the Sexten valley to Innichen and Toblach on the Puster Thal railway. Formidable works had been constructed at Sexten and Lambro, covering the approaches to the railway, and the Italian artillery began to bombard the forts preparatory to a descent into the Drave valley. This movement had considerable strategic importance, for when the railway was reached communication along the Puster Thal between the Adige and the Isonzo would be cut, and the Austrian position in the Trentino turned.

The further the Italians advanced the greater the pressure on the Austrians, and the more troops they would have to divert from the Russian frontier to meet the threatened danger in the west. The main Italian attack came across the Isonzo, and this was as it should be, for a successful offensive in this direction would go far to determine the attitude of the Balkan States, all of whom are making ready for war, but holding back till the Allied Powers have obtained some sufficiently decisive successes to justify intervention on their side. A glance at the map shows what possibilities existed for a movement into the valley of the Danube by the Italians acting in co-operation with the armies of Serbia and Roumania.

There was a general, but not very pronounced, recrudescence of the German offensive during July in the western theatre of war along most sections of the front occupied by the Allied Armies, this offensive taking the form of reconnaissance attacks directed with the apparent intention of discovering weak points in the line rather than with the purpose of obtaining a strategical success. North of Arras a series of German counter-attacks brought to an end for the moment the French movement on Lens, while in the Woerth district German activity was occupied in preventing the French from straightening out the St. Mihiel salient, which it was of vital importance to retain in view of a possible ulterior attempt being made to break through the French line in the Verdun region, and reach Paris up the valley of the Marne.

Whether the Crown Prince of Germany had this in mind, or, what is more probable, wished to mark his return to his army by achieving a substantial success, he made two most determined attempts to break through the French line in the Bois de la Grurie¹ in order to reach the St. Ménéhould-Verdun railway, which is the principal route by which Verdun has been supplied since its investment by the Germans on the north and west. The first attempt was made on June 8th, and led to some desperate fighting between the Binnarville-Vienne-Le Château road and the route Marie Thérèse, where a battle was fought lasting over four days, when the Crown Prince drew off his troops without having made any appreciable gain of ground. The attack was renewed on July 12th on a wider front extending as far west as the Haute Chevauchée, on the eastern extremity of the Bois de la Grurie, but it was again unsuccessful. The Crown Prince claimed certain minor tactical successes, which General Barrail, the French commander, refused to admit, but in any case, whatever the trifling gains or losses may have been on either side, the Crown Prince's object was defeated, and communications with Verdun remained open.

If June was a bad month for Russia, July was worse. When Generals Mackensen and Boehm-Ermolli, moving in co-operation, reached, as was seen in the preceding chapter, the Grodek position, which covers the approaches to Lemberg from the west, there were good hopes that General Ivanoff would put up a successful defence of this position, which is a very strong one, but the Russians made no serious attempt to hold it, and on the night of June 18th they fell back through Lemberg on their way to the Bug, leaving strong rearguards behind to gain time for the evacuation of the town. While Mackensen made his way northwards, capturing Zolkiew² and Rawa-Ruska on the 19th, Boehm-Ermolli advanced along the railway, and on June 22nd, after a good deal of fighting with the Russian rearguards, he entered the Galician capital, which had been in Russian occupation since the first week in September. He took neither prisoners nor booty in the town, which had been left in excellent order by the Russian administration.

The military value of Lemberg was naturally discounted at Petrograd, but its fall was a heavy blow to our Allies. If we look at the map we see that Lemberg is a great strategical railway junction, in and around which the whole railway system

¹ See map on p. 71.

² See map on p. 159.

of Galicia is centred. For this reason it has been called the key of Galicia, and the Russians discovered this to their advantage when they captured the town last September, and used it as an advance base for their intended invasion of Hungary. As soon as the town was occupied by the enemy the line of the Dniester was turned, and retreat was inevitable.

There was no pause in the enemy's offensive. On June 23rd Linsingen, operating from Stryj, crossed the Dniester between Halicz and Zurawno, and in spite of a temporary check, defeated the Russians in a five-days' battle on the left bank, and threw them back behind the Gnaila Lipa. Thence they retreated further east to the Zlota Lipa, which they reached on July 1st, and there linked up with the Russian Army holding the line of the upper Bug. Up to this date the Russians defending the Dniester below Nizniow down to Chotin were still in position on the left bank of the river.

While these operations were taking place in Eastern Galicia Mackensen was preparing to strike another blow, which was this time aimed at Warsaw. For this purpose he determined to change front from east to north, and move into Russian Poland between the Vistula and the Bug rivers with the intention of reaching Warsaw on the right bank of the middle Vistula. It was a bold scheme, a similar one having led to the Austrian *débâcle* in September 1914. Leaving the Galician railways behind them, he and the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, dividing the country into two halves, started on their march northwards on or about June 30th, the Archduke directing his way to Lublin between the Vistula and the Wieprz, while Mackensen conducted his "phalanx" between the latter river and the Bug, having Cholm for his immediate objective. The Archduke, who was first in the field, and whose advanced guards had crossed the Tanew river some days previously, marched very rapidly, reached the Wisnica on July 2nd, and fought a pitched battle at Krasnik with the Russians, defeating them and causing them to retreat across the Urzedow. The success, however, was short lived, for the Russian commander brought up his reserves, and falling upon the left flank of the Archduke's army, struck it so hard a blow that the Austrians were thrown back to the Wisnica, and took up a defensive position on the heights north of Krasnik. Mackensen had meanwhile advanced up to the Wolica, but when he heard of the Archduke's discomfiture he halted, and sent troops to his assistance. This appears to have taken the pressure off the Archduke, and released Mackensen for a further onward movement, for the news

soon arrived that the German Army, advancing on both banks of the Wierprz, had crossed the Wolica, and occupied Krasnostaw, which was within a short day's march of the Lublin-Cholm railway, the Russians having retired to a second defensive position covering the line. Meanwhile, the Austrian General Kirchbach crossed the Bug in the neighbourhood of Sokal, the effect of which was to isolate the Russians on the Złota Lipa and lower Dniester from the Russian Army operating in Poland. On the left bank of the middle Vistula General Woynsch reached the Radom-Ivangorod railway.

While these movements were taking place in Eastern Galicia and Russian Poland, Hindenburg, with his usual secrecy had been collecting fresh troops on the East Prussian frontier between Soldau and Willenberg, with the intention of advancing to the Narew, and attacking Warsaw across that river. Suddenly taking the offensive he surprised the Russian Army which had been watching the frontier, and which fell back on the defensive position between Ciechanow and Przasnysz where it was attacked on July 14th, and compelled to retire behind the Narew. The German Army then deployed along the right bank of the river from Ostrolenka to Novo Georgievsk.

"If Hindenburg forces the Russian defences on the Narew, and Mackensen reaches the Ivangorod-Cholm railway, the Warsaw salient will be untenable, and the Grand Duke will have no alternative but to abandon the Polish capital, give up the line of the Vistula, and draw his army back behind the Bug. Threatened by an all-round enveloping movement, which has been carefully prepared, and is being energetically carried out, Warsaw is in greater danger than it has ever been before during the year's campaign. Vigorous counter-attacks may yet save the situation, but it is doubtful if the Russian troops after their recent reverses are in a mood to resume the offensive with any hope of success. What is more probable is that the Grand Duke will sacrifice Warsaw to save his army, but it is safer not to prophesy, for what most frequently happens in war is the unexpected."

The above quoted words were written on the 18th July, 1915, the prophecy which was then made proving literally correct, as will be seen when we turn to the next chapter of this volume.

CHAPTER XIV

July 18th to August 18th

1915

all on the British front—Affair at Hooge—Sir Ian Hamilton pushes his attacks in the Gallipoli Peninsula—Landing at Suvla Bay—French gains in the Vosges—Defeat of the Crown Prince in the Argonne—Italian position on the Isonzo—The Carso plateau—Hindenburg develops his plan of campaign—His brilliant strategy—Distribution of his armies—Russians retire all along their front—Fall of Warsaw—Fall of Kovno—Germans threaten Brest Litovsk—The Dwina-Dnieper line of defence.

DURING July and August there was a lull in the fighting on the British front in the western theatre of war, and this gave time for Sir John French and his staff to organise the new levies as they arrived in France, and gradually familiarise them with their future duties. Though the New Armies were composed of the picked manhood of the country, the oldest soldiers among them had only completed one year of service in August 1915, while many had not been under training for more than six months. Seeing that in Continental armies two years are considered necessary before a conscript can be classed as "fully trained," it would have been inexpedient to have sent whole brigades and divisions composed of New Army recruits into the fighting line before the regimental units had been given a turn in the trenches, and acquired some antecedent experience of the novel conditions under which the present war is being waged.

One episode, however, occurred deserving special notice, not on account of its having led to any strategical results, but by reason of its tactical significance. It will be within the recollection of those who followed the Field-Marshal's bulletins that on July 20th a mine was successfully exploded just west of the Château of Hooge, on the Ypres-Menin road, when our troops occupied about 150 yards of the enemy's trenches. It was expected that a counter-attack would have been made forthwith, but it was delayed till the 30th, when a tremendous artillery fire was brought to bear on the Hooge salient, under

cover of which the German infantry crept forward, armed with fire projectors, which, when a valve is opened, project a long flaming jet. Shaken by the bombardment, this flame attack proved too much for our men, and the Germans occupied our first-line trenches on a front of some 500 yards. Next day some, but not all, of these trenches were recaptured, and the enemy could undoubtedly claim a limited success, which, however, he did not long enjoy, for on August 9th a large force of British artillery was concentrated round Hooze, and after a bombardment which was described as more terrific than that of Neuve Chapelle, the infantry were launched for the attack, and stormed the whole of the German trenches on a front of more than 1200 yards, capturing all they had lost on July 30th, as well as other trenches which had been in the enemy's possession ever since the contraction of the British line during the first week in May.

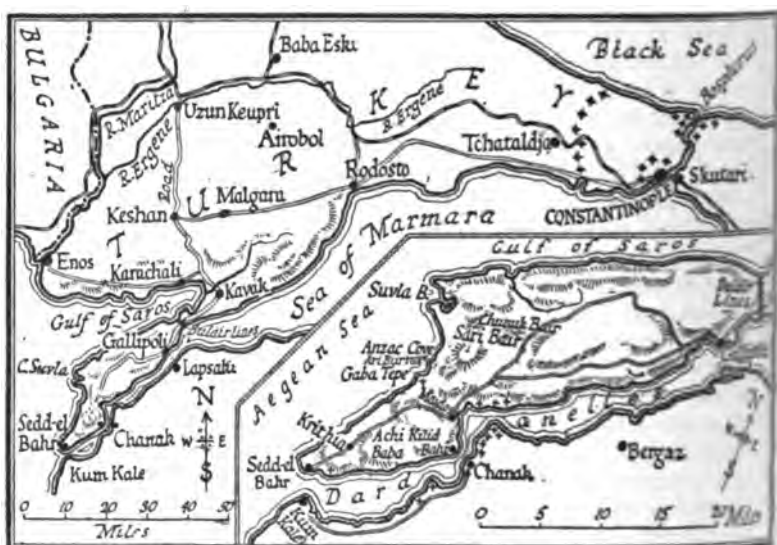
The point to note is this. The success of the infantry attack was due to the effective artillery bombardment and to the perfectly organised co-operation between the two arms. The lesson of Neuve Chapelle had been learnt. According to *The Times* correspondent with British Headquarters, the infantry attack had been fixed to take place at a certain minute between three and four o'clock in the morning, at which moment our gunners were to lengthen the fuses of their shells and direct the fire of the guns on to the German reserve positions. "Everything," he wrote in a dispatch dated August 13th, "went like clockwork. Every watch had been carefully synchronised, and some three-quarters of an hour after the bombardment had begun our men had gained possession of the trenches they aimed at. They swarmed over the German parapets in a surging stream which nothing could stop. The German troops, dazed and paralysed by the incessant flow of shell fire, were unfit to make any serious resistance, and, apart from a certain amount of bayonet work, our men had little difficulty in establishing themselves in the enemy's first line. All who took part in the attack are convinced that the German infantry showed small inclination to fight, and took to their heels at the first opportunity." So well had the gunners done their work, that when the infantry reached the trenches they found the barbed-wire entanglements had all been completely destroyed, and many breaches made in the parapets. "As far as my experience goes, and it dates from the retreat from Mons," said a battalion commander, who took part in the attack, to the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, "this is the

first time our artillery have done all we could hope, and a bit more. Our gunners seemed to have a real good supply of ammunition, and this made us all feel cheerful. They prepared the way magnificently for our infantry attack, and I am convinced that if we can keep on in the same way we shall soon have the enemy 'beat.' The Germans have been fighting this war on chemistry and machinery. Man for man they can't ace us. If our guns go on supporting us in the same way we shall have them at our mercy."

In the Gallipoli Peninsula Sir Ian Hamilton continued to push his offensive against the Turkish positions with promising results; but military interest was principally centred in his bulletin issued on August 10th, in which, after reporting some successful fighting in the southern zone of operations east of Krithia, he stated that in the Anzac zone a footing had been gained on the Chunuk Bair portion of the Sari Bair ridgeway, while in a later report issued by the Press Bureau on the same day we were informed that the area held in this region had been nearly trebled, "owing chiefly to the gallant dash of the Australian and New Zealand Corps." The most important part of the news given, however, was reserved for the end of the bulletin, when the Commander-in-Chief reported that a fresh landing had been successfully accomplished "elsewhere," and "considerable progress had been made." The full significance of this message was not at first clear, and a Turkish *communiqué*, issued on the same day, stating that "on August 7th the enemy landed new forces, partly in the neighbourhood of Karachali, and the remainder at two points north of Ari Burnu," did not add much to our knowledge of what had happened. A French report issued on August 14th threw further light on the matter, for it stated that a British force had successfully landed in the region of the Bay of Suvla, and made progress south, gaining a footing on the Sari Bair range, and capturing more than 650 prisoners, with nine machine guns. On the following day a further report was received from Sir Ian Hamilton in which he referred to "the troops at Suvla" having made a short advance. This cleared up the mystery, and located Suvla Bay as the place where the new landing had been effected; the landing at Karachali turned out to be merely a feint attack made by a small detachment of troops.

Had the landing taken place in the Gulf of Saros, as was at first thought to have been the case, it would have constituted a new *démarche*, which could not fail to have had an

important influence on the future operations in the Gallipoli Peninsula. The accompanying sketch has been drawn to illustrate the position. The coast road from Gallipoli to Rodosto is nothing more than a bridle pathway, and land communication between Gallipoli and Constantinople has always been maintained by the north road, which leads from Kavak to Keshan, and thence through Malgara and Rodosto to the capital. An alternative line of communication is by the high road from Kavak to Uzun Keupri, a station on the Orient Railway about fifty miles north of the Gulf of Saros. Karachali is only ten miles from Kavak, and if a force had been



landed at the former place, and sent on to occupy Kavak, it would not only have taken the lines of Bulair in rear, but would also have cut off the Turkish Army operating in the Gallipoli Peninsula from communication with Constantinople. Men and stores would have to have come by sea; but British submarines had already rendered this line of supply precarious, and they were not likely to be less active in the future than they had been in the past. Surprise has often been expressed that we have not made use of our sea power to block the retreat of the Turks through Gallipoli, and force them to cross the Dardanelles to the Asiatic side of the Straits. Enos has been suggested as a suitable place for a disembarkation of troops

on account of its secure harbour; but Enos is forty miles from Kavak, and the road lies through a rugged country favourable to the defence.¹ East of Karachali the hills give place to flat ground, which, though marshy and cut up with water-courses, affords ample room for the deployment of troops when disembarked. There are many who think that the initial error committed in the Dardanelles campaign was the omission of the military authorities to make use of our sea supremacy to land a force in rear of the Bulair position.

The French passed through another successful month, having held their ground all along the front occupied by their troops, while in some places they recovered territory which had been in German occupation since September in last year. A notable gain was made at the Ban de Sapt, which is the name given to a mountainous district adjoining the Vosges range a few miles north-east of St. Dié, with hills varying in height from 1800 to 2700 feet. The Germans had seized positions on French territory in this locality a few miles across the frontier, but the French had been for some months past slowly pushing them back to their own boundary, and on July 9th they captured the heights overlooking Fontenelle, one of the group of hamlets which form the Ban de Sapt. On July 16th the Germans counter-attacked the heights gained by the French, but were repulsed with heavy loss, and on the 24th the French commander decided to follow up his previous success by a further attack on the enemy's entrenchments covering the village of Launois. The attack was entirely successful, the village being recovered, and the Germans driven from all their first-line defences. On this occasion the French took 11 officers and 825 men prisoners, along with 8 machine guns and a quantity of war material.

Another notable success lower down the front, in Alsace, was the capture of the formidable position of Le Linge, which is two miles north of Münster, and dominates the Fecht valley for several miles below the town. This position was seized on July 21st, and has been held ever since, in spite of repeated counter-attacks by the Germans. At one time it was thought that Münster would be captured by a *coup de main*, as German

¹ This question is fully discussed in Sir Ian Hamilton's despatch of the 11th December, 1915, to which reference will be made in Chapter XX of this volume. One of the reasons for not landing troops in the Gulf of Saros was the objection of the naval authorities to extending the sea area which they were required to protect against the enemy's submarine attacks.

hold of the town was daily growing more precarious, but the policy of General Joffre has always been to husband the strength of his troops with great care, and while he permits commanders on the spot to seize any opportunities which are offered for local attacks, he has forbidden them to take risks or sacrifice men for the purpose of some small tactical gain.

The Crown Prince of Germany, still at the head of his ill-fated army, had not given up the hope of penetrating the French line in the Argonne, and spared neither men nor ammunition for the purpose. On the morning of August 7th, after a violent bombardment, during which 20,000 shells were estimated to have been fired against the French trenches, three German regiments were ordered to assault the position between Vienne-Château and La Harazee. The French stood against the bombardment with unflinching courage, and repulsed three German attacks without yielding an inch of ground.

Turning now to the operations of our Italian Allies on the Isonzo a continuous night and day battle went on through July and August for possession of the Carso plateau, which commands the approaches to Gorizia both from Laibach and Trieste, as well as the coast road to the latter town. Gorizia, with its circle of outlying forts, was practically unassailable from either the north or west, for two fortified heights, Monte Sabatino on the right bank, and Monte Gabrielle, on the left bank, of the Isonzo, stood sentry over the town on the north, while the plateau of Podgora, which was a perfect labyrinth of deep, inter-communicating trenches, barred the approach to the town from the west. A most determined and carefully prepared attack was made by a large Italian force on Podgora on July 21st, but though ten regiments were sent against the position they failed to get through. The Carso plateau, as both Italians and Austrians know, is the key to Gorizia, and it was against the strong Austrian positions on this plateau that General Cadorna concentrated his first and principal efforts.

The Italians succeeded in obtaining a firm footing on the western face of the plateau, and occupied Sdraissima, Polazzo, Vermeigliano, and Monte Sei Busi, which overlooks Monfalcone, but they have made little progress beyond these first-line positions, and finding the Austrians had been strongly reinforced, General Cadorna abandoned his storming tactics, and decided to advance eastwards along the plateau by the slower, but surer, method of siege operations. In the middle of July it looked as though there was a weakening of the Austrian

resistance, for on the 19th the Italians stormed Monte Michele, on the north-west corner of the plateau, and if they could have kept it they would have been able to bombard Podgora from the reverse side, besides cutting railway communication between Gorizia and Trieste. Unfortunately, the Austrians brought up large reinforcements of reserve troops on the 20th, and after a severe fight they succeeded in recapturing the position. The Italians successfully assaulted it for the second time on the 25th, but another counter-attack gave it back to the Austrians, and General Cadorna then drew off his troops. On the south side of the plateau the Sei Busi position was held against repeated Austrian counter-attacks, and the Italians used it as a base for advancing to Doberdo, which served as a central citadel to the Carso plateau. Our Allies fought with admirable *elan*, but their task was a heavy one, for the Austrians had been preparing their defensive positions for years past, and all that science could do was done to render them impregnable.

August was another bad month for Russia. The Russian Armies, which at the beginning of July were holding the line of the Vistula and Narew rivers, had no sooner withdrawn to their second line of defence behind the Bug and the Niemen, when the Grand Duke Nicholas decided that a further retreat was necessary to maintain his armies intact, and give time for recuperation before resuming the offensive. Fortune ceased to smile on our Allies, but the situation was not so bad as it looked, and Russian determination to win was strengthened rather than weakened by the military reverses of the summer of 1915.

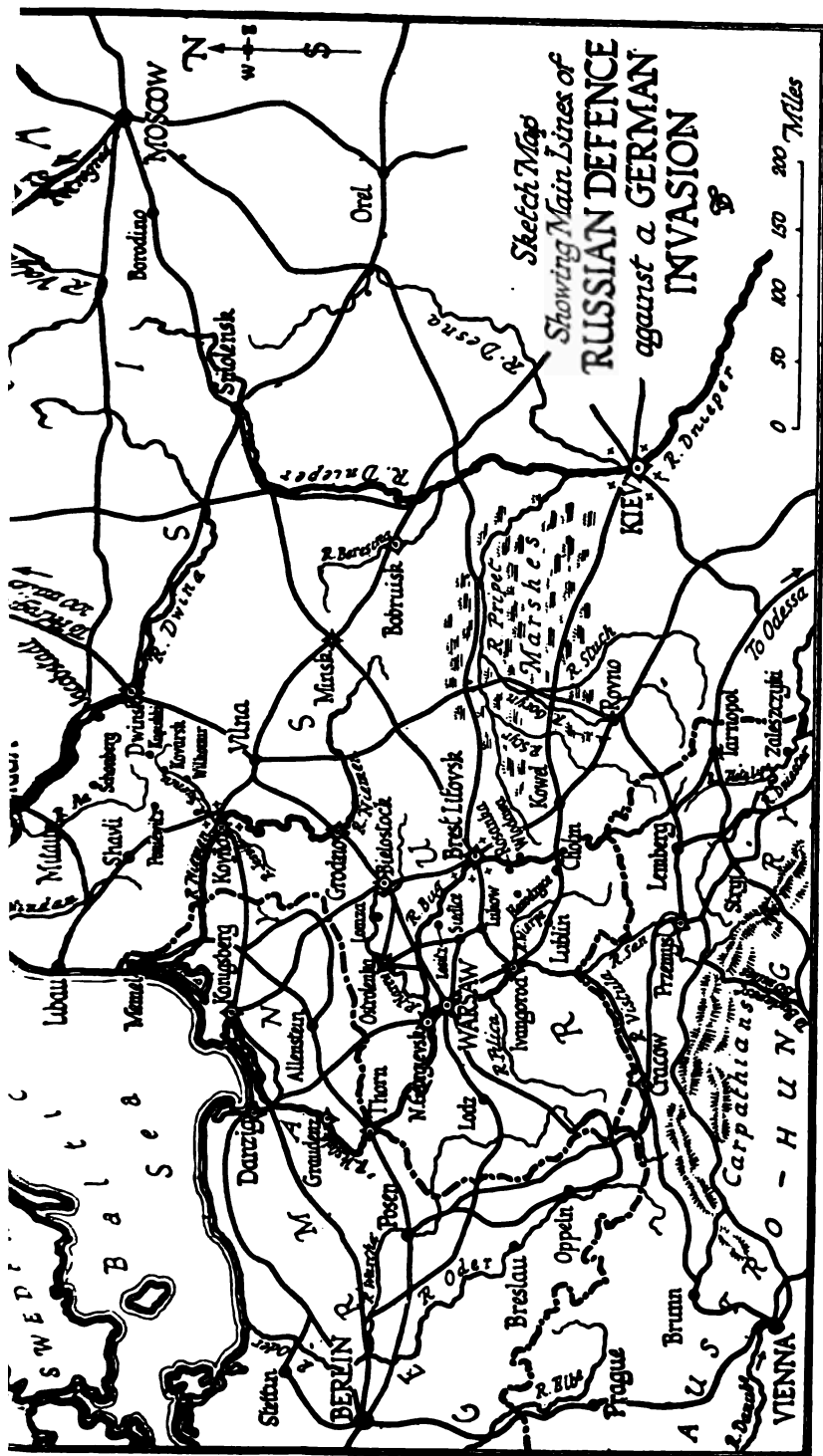
If, as is believed, Field-Marshal Hindenburg in communication with General Falkenhayn conceived, planned, and executed the campaign, which began on April 22nd with the attack on General Dimitrieff's army on the Dunajec, and led to the occupation of Warsaw by Prince Leopold on August 4th, he has established a claim to a high place among living strategists, for he grasped the problem before him with a foresight which provided for every eventuality, and left no stone unturned to secure success. One army after another was first organised, then concentrated, and finally launched at the right time, and in the right place, just when and where it was wanted to step into the strategical area. It is true that the Marshal failed to obtain the full results which he expected, for there was no Sedan in Poland; but this was not the fault of his strategy, and was due to the skill of his imperturbable antagonist, who always seemed to know where to stand and

when to retire, and kept his brain cool, no matter how difficult the situation which confronted him.

Eight separate armies, collected together in three groups, each under a Field-Marshal, were used for the purposes of the campaign. The first group, which was placed under Hindenburg's personal executive direction, consisted of General Bülow's Army in Courland, of General Eichhorn's on the Niemen, and of the armies commanded, respectively, by Generals Scholtz and Gallwitz, who were given the region of the Narew river for their sphere of operations. By the middle of July these armies were deployed on a 800-mile front, extending from the Windau river in Courland down to the lower Vistula at Thorn. West of Warsaw, in the salient formed by the middle and lower Vistula, was the group commanded by Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria, who besides his own Bavarian Corps was given command of the Austrian Army under General Woyrsch, which was operating towards Ivan-gorod, on the left bank of the river. The third group was under the command of Field-Marshal Mackensen, whose army, chiefly composed of Prussian Corps, was linked with that of the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand. The sphere of operation of these two armies lay between the Middle Vistula and the Bug, the Archduke taking charge of the country west of the Wierp, while Mackensen's army was deployed east of that river.¹ Further south were the armies of Generals Linsingen and Pflanzer-Baltin, watching the Russians on the left bank of the Zlota Lipa and Dniester rivers, but these armies took little if any part in the August campaign. The length of the entire front occupied by the opposing armies approximated to 700 miles, while the strength of the forces engaged is believed to have been not less than two millions on either side.

The following is a brief summary of the movements made during the period between July 18th and August 18th. On the 19th July Bülow began to move from the Dubissa towards the Aa and Swenta, his right and left flanks being covered by large bodies of cavalry. On that day Gallwitz crossed the Narew near Pultusk, which was the signal for the Grand Duke Nicholas to begin the evacuation of Warsaw, and clear out of the city everything likely to be of use to the enemy. Next day a general retirement of the Russian forces began all along the front, strong rearguards being left in touch with the enemy to prevent the retreat being harassed. On the 21st the Russian troops covering the western approaches to Warsaw fell back to

¹ See map on p. 175.



the line Blonie-Grodzisk,¹ and on the same day a division of Woyrsch's army crossed the Vistula at a point fifteen miles south of Ivangorod. On the 28rd, after storming the bridge-heads at Roshan and Pultusk, Gallwitz crossed the Narew in force. On the 25th Bülow in Courland reached Ponievitz, and Scholtz, coming into line with Gallwitz, crossed the Narew near Ostrolenka. On the 26th and two following days the Russians made a series of determined counter-attacks against the whole line of German troops on the left bank of the Narew, delaying their advance and inflicting heavy loss, but failing to throw them back on to the right bank. The 29th was a fateful day for our Allies, for Woyrsch with his main body crossed the Vistula a few miles above Ivangorod, while the left wing of Mackensen's army reached Biskupice, a station on the Lublin-Cholm railway between the Wierpz and the Vistula. On the 31st the Archduke occupied Lublin, and Mackensen Cholm, the whole line of the railway between those two towns then being in German hands.

During the first week in August the Russian retirement became more pronounced all along the line. In Courland Bülow moving on a front of some sixty or seventy miles, occupied Kupischki, on the Ponievitz-Dwinsk railway, while his cavalry reached the neighbourhood of Schonberg on the north and Kovarsk on the south. By the 5th he had secured possession of the line of the Aa and Swenta rivers from Mitau down to Wilkomir (see map, p. 185), but about this time reinforcements had arrived for our Allies, and the Russian commander, taking the offensive, turned on Bülow, reoccupied Kupischki, and threw the Germans back across the Aa and Swenta. Meanwhile, Gallwitz and Scholtz, advancing from the Narew, and continually pushing back the Russian rearguards, in spite of their "brave and desperate counter-attacks," for which Hindenburg gave them full credit, made the further defence of the Warsaw salient impracticable, and on August 3rd the Russian Army covering the approaches to the city on the west abandoned the Blonie position and retreated through the town to Praga, leaving Prince Leopold of Bavaria free to enter Warsaw on the morning of the 4th.

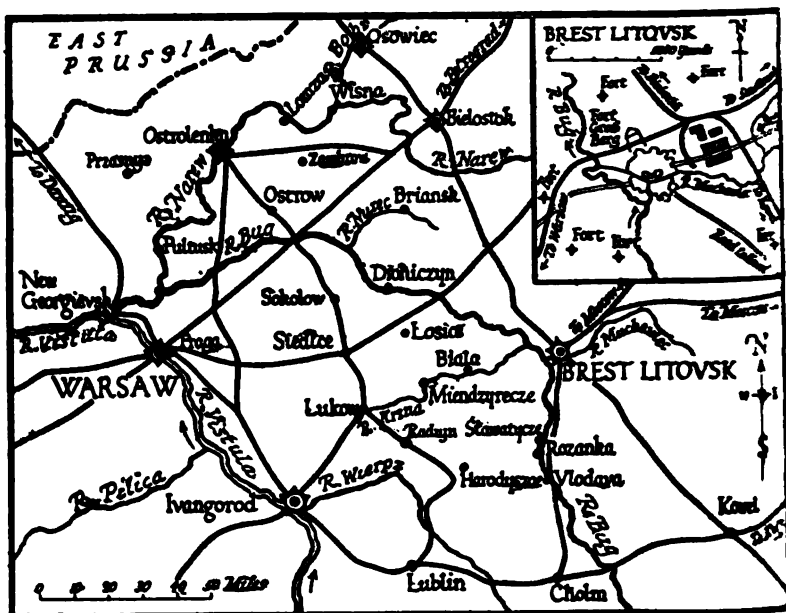
The capture of Warsaw was only an incident, and from a military point of view not an important one, in a campaign which had for its object, not the occupation of territory, but the destruction of the Russian Armies. Warsaw was to be the trap in which the German commander thought to catch

¹ See map facing p. 102.

the Grand Duke, and his strategy was shaped with this end in view. The Russian Army covering the approaches to the city on the west was allowed to remain in position without being attacked in the hope that it would remain long enough to be unable to escape. Hindenburg's plan was to envelop Warsaw by a rapid movement of Gallwitz from the Narew and of Mackensen from Galicia. If these two Generals could meet together on the line Bielostock-Brest Litovsk, while Prince Leopold was playing with the Russian Army on the west of the city, the Grand Duke would be locked up in Warsaw as Marshal Bazaine was locked up in Metz. It was Moltke's strategy over again, and if it had succeeded it would have spelt doom to the Russian Army. Its failure was due to the combatant qualities of the Russian infantry, who fought with their backs to the wall with truly magnificent courage. They had little help from their artillery, for their guns were overwhelmingly outnumbered, as well as outclassed, by those of the enemy, while their ammunition supply began to fail just when the pressure of Hindenburg's attacks became most pronounced. In spite of these adverse circumstances, the Grand Duke's rearguards fought with such stubborn tenacity that they delayed Gallwitz on the north and Mackensen on the south long enough to give time for the orderly withdrawal of the Army out of the threatened salient, and for the evacuation of Warsaw. Admirably conceived and precisely executed, Hindenburg's plan failed in the main purpose for which it was undertaken. Warsaw was lost, but the Russian Army was saved.

After his disappointment at Warsaw, Hindenburg transferred his efforts from the Vistula to the Bug, with the hope, no doubt, of setting another trap for the Grand Duke at Brest Litovsk. Leaving Bülow for the moment to take care of himself in Courland, he decided to increase the area of his enveloping movement directed against the Bug fortress by first of all capturing Kovno—the key to the Russian line of defence on the Niemen. Herein the German commander again showed his correct appreciation of the strategical situation confronting him. On August 6th General Eichhorn, who had been facing the Niemen for the past six months, and had been reinforced with the necessary siege guns and material, arrived before the western defences of the fortress, and, without attempting to invest the place, attacked the forts between the Niemen and its tributary, the Jessia. The Russian garrison put up a most energetic resistance, and Eichhorn's infantry, who prematurely attempted to storm the western forts before they had been

subdued by artillery fire, were repulsed with enormous losses, which were reported to be equal to those incurred at Liège; but the 16-inch howitzers proved too much for the defenders, and on August 16th the forts on the south side of the Niemen fell into German hands. This was the beginning of the end, for on the night of the 17th the Germans crossed the Niemen and captured the rest of the fortress, making prisoners of 80 officers and 8900 men. More than 400 guns and a great quantity of war material were taken at the same time, but the bulk of the



garrison succeeded in escaping and joining the mobile army covering Vilna.

The fall of Kovno was a greater military disaster than that of Warsaw, not only because the line of the Niemen was turned, but also because the road to Vilna was opened up, and another German Army let loose to act against the Russian communications with Petrograd and Moscow. True to his thrusting character Hindenburg set Eichhorn's victorious army in immediate motion to Vilna with the intention of using the town as a fresh starting-off point for an advance to Minsk, so as to get behind the Russian Army covering Brest Litovsk, and cut

off its retreat to the Dnieper. The Marshal paid dearly for the capture of Kovno, but the prize was worth its cost.

Meanwhile, lower down the line the German armies were nearing Brest Litovsk. Scholtz, with Gallwitz on his right, crossed the Nurec river (see map, p. 188) on August 15th, and the two Generals then pushed on to the Bielostock-Brest Litovsk railway. So, too, did Prince Leopold of Bavaria, who threw off the Russian troops blocking his way from Sokolow, and whose left wing crossed the Bug at Drohiczyn on the same day as Scholtz and Gallwitz crossed the Nurec. Higher up the Bug the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, who belonged to Mackensen's group, having left Biala behind him, also crossed the river at Janow, which is not marked on the map, but is about twenty miles north-west of Brest Litovsk. By these movements the Germans deprived the Russian Army defending the Bug fortress of one of its lines of railway communication with Petrograd through Bielostock, while Mackensen's right wing, operating on the east bank of the Bug below Vlodava, threatened another line of retreat through Kovel to Kief. It then became clear that the Grand Duke would be unable to stay where he was on the Bug, and a further retreat would be necessary. How this was brought about will be told in Chapter XVI.

Brest Litovsk had of late years been converted into a big entrenched camp, and a vast quantity of store and war *matériel* had been collected within its precincts with a view to its use as an advanced base for offensive operations against Galicia. Strong as the fortress was, and important as it was to hold it, the safety of the Russian Army was more important still, and this the Grand Duke knew, for as we shall presently see he had no hesitation in sacrificing the fortress to save his army. If the worst came to the worst the Russians had a far more formidable line of defence to fall back upon behind the Dwina and Dnieper, which two rivers, with the Dnieper's tributary, the Beresina, form an almost continuous barrier stretching right across the centre of European Russia, and covering the approaches to Petrograd and Moscow.¹ This natural line is strengthened by artificial defences, which are based on the three central *points d'appui* shown in the strategical map accompanying this article, Dwinsk guarding the railway across the Dwina to Petrograd, Bobruisk with its bridge-head protecting the main crossing of the Beresina, and the entrenched camp at Kief, which is situated athwart the Dnieper. A glance at the map shows how formidable a task Hindenburg would set himself if, carried

¹ See map on p. 185.

away by the lust of conquest, he were to persuade General Falkenhayn to let him continue his march to this third line of Russian defence. Petrograd is 260 miles from Dwinsk, and Moscow is 600 from Kiev. Nothing would have suited our Allies better than for Hindenburg's armies to have followed them to the Dnieper, where they would have arrived when the Russian winter was setting in with full severity; but the German General Staff wisely decided not to embark on a campaign of such magnitude at so late a season of the year, and Hindenburg was ordered to consolidate his positions on the Niemen and Bug rivers, and then wait for orders. Whatever they do, and wherever they go, the Germans are always haunted by the knowledge that their provocative action before and during the war, like Napoleon's before them, has closed the door to peace till their powers of provocation are taken from them, or, in other words, till their armed strength has been destroyed.

CHAPTER XV

TWELVE MONTHS OF WAR

Twelve months of war—The situation as between ourselves, Allies, and enemies—Strength of the Entente Alliance—German "frightfulness"—hardening of opinion throughout the Empire—A democratic war—German hatred of Great Britain—German failure in the west—Pyrrhic victories of German armies in Russia—Russian armies intact—Pessimism in London—Its superficial character—Miscalculations about the duration of the war—Germany's armed strength—Great Britain putting her armour on—Immense belligerent resources of the Empire—German duplicity—World-power fallen from her grasp—Causes for which we are fighting—An optimistic outlook.

BEFORE continuing this record it will here be convenient to take stock of the situation between ourselves, our Allies, and our enemies as it existed after twelve months of war. In what condition, in the first place, did Germany find herself after the tremendous efforts which she had put forth? Were her chances of victory better or worse than they were when she began her war of conquest in August 1914? Were the results which her armies obtained commensurate with the sacrifices made, and how did those sacrifices compare with those of the other belligerent Powers? Fighting on two fronts at once, and with the advantage of interior lines, did Germany succeed in so weakening her opponents as to shake the unity of their Alliance, and prepare the way for joint or separate peace negotiations?

One of the questions can be answered at once without beating about the bush. The Alliance between Great Britain, France, and Russia was stronger, firmer, and closer than it had ever been before. The repeated declarations of M. Viviani,¹ the rescript of the Emperor of Russia, the resolute words of

¹ "You know what is hidden beneath the brilliant qualities of our race, and that resistance to the most tragic trial wears out neither its body nor its spirit. And if this trial is prolonged, if days of fighting continue one after the other, you know that France is neither weary, nor resigned; that she stands erect with an organised, ardent, and redoubtable Army, sure of conquering with the indomitable Allies who are defending the same cause."—*Speech of M. VIVIANI at the American Chamber of Commerce, Paris, July 5th, 1915.*

Mr. Asquith,¹ were a public pledge that the Allies would continue the war till the purpose for which they took up arms had been accomplished, and the military power of Germany "finally and fully destroyed." At the time mentioned Italy had no written compact binding herself, as the Triple Entente Powers had bound themselves, not to make a separate peace with the enemy, but Signor Salandra's declaration of intention was unmistakable, and he had the whole Italian nation, including Signor Giolitti, behind him. Speaking at Cuneo on July 5th. the latter made a passionate appeal to the patriotism of his party in the following words: "No sacrifice will seem too great when we reflect upon the result of the war, upon the conditions of peace, and that upon Italy's political situation at the conclusion of the war will depend the future of the nation. Let the attitude of our people signify their firm resolve to conquer at any cost." The war united parties in Italy, as closely as in England.

Not only in the United Kingdom, but throughout the Empire, in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, there was a distinct hardening of public opinion in favour of continuing the war till the German reign of terror in Europe had been ended. Germany had thrown down the gauntlet to Great Britain, and made no secret of her intention, which was to destroy our sea power, and substitute German for British supremacy on the seas.² This altered the character of the struggle, and whereas the war was at first undertaken by us as a duty towards our neighbours we are now waging it as a duty towards ourselves. So far as they are able to do so, the Germans were attacking us with methods of "frightfulness" conceived in the same spirit as those which they employed so barbarously to reduce Belgium to submission. If we are beaten the fate of

¹ "We shall fight to the end, to the last farthing of our money, to the last ounce of our strength, to the last drop of our blood."—THE RIGHT HON. H. H. ASQUITH, *Guildhall*, June 20th, 1915.

² Writing in July in the *Tageszeitung*, Count Reventlow, a typical Junker representative, referred as follows to future relations between Germany and Great Britain—

"The war has proved that no understanding can ever be possible with Great Britain, and Germany cannot accept the position of ruling the world by the side of England. Therefore, we must break the strength of the Island without paying any attention to the possibility of any future friendliness, even after the war has been terminated. Those who refuse to hate England must be regarded with feelings of contempt and disgust. No other course is possible for true Germans." Count Reventlow's words are quoted not because he is a person of much account in Germany, but because his words are the reflection of German public opinion as it finds expression in all sections of the German community.

Belgium will be our fate, and conscious of this we have taken off our gloves, and are preparing with one voice and will for a deadly struggle which will demand the same sustained effort as we put forth in the war against Napoleon. The bombardment of Scarborough, the German air raids on open towns, the sinking of the *Lusitania*, the continuation of the submarine war against defenceless merchant and fishing vessels, added daily increasing strength to our determination, not only to conquer, but to punish the authors of these piratical crimes, and secure effective guarantees against the possibility of their repetition.

A notable feature of the existing situation was the growth of the war feeling among the industrial classes of the country. These are some of the utterances of Labour leaders, and they are so expressive of the opinions of those whom they represent in Parliament, that they deserve to be recorded, if only to show that this is a people's war, which is being waged to secure the triumph of democratic principles as opposed to German methods of autocratic government. In the debate on the second reading of the Munitions of War Bill, on June 28th, Mr. J. Hodge, Labour Member for the Gorton Division of S.E. Lancashire, concluded his speech with the following declaration—

“ In my humble way I have realised the great gravity of the contest in which we are engaged. I realise that it is far better to give up any privileges we possess at the present time than to have no liberties at all; and this would be the case if the Germans were successful.”

Again, on July 2nd, when the Bill was being considered in Committee, Mr. W. Crooks spoke as under—

“ I have stumped the country since the war began, east and west, north and south, and I have never heard a single word said against the war. What the people say is this: ‘ Go on, and pull through. The liberties of the common people are at stake.’ This is not a Government war; it is not a capitalist war; it is a people's war. We have to look to you—the Government—and loyal will we be when you tell us what you want, but for God's sake do not keep us idle.”

Another Labour opinion to be noted is that of Mr. Charles Duncan, Member for Barrow-in-Furness, who, when supporting the second reading of the National Registration Bill on July 5th, made use of the following emphatic words.

"We are faced with the direst necessity that this nation has ever seen, and if we go down in this war it will be very little we talking about liberty and the sanctity of the privileges that we have held in this country. It is because I feel in my very soul that this nation, and this Empire, are fighting for very life. are fighting for existence, that I am in favour of this Bill."

The above quotations from Labour speeches leave no room to doubt the temper of the working classes, who as a body are solid for the war. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Philip Snowden are unable to see eye to eye with their fellow-Members, but then they are not working men, and are nothing more than the academical apostles of State Socialism. Other opponents of the war are too insignificant in numbers and standing to justify any notice being taken of their propaganda.

While this hardening of opinion was noticeable in Great Britain, and, if there were time to show it, in France and Russia also, there was evidence of a corresponding weakening of feeling among the German industrial classes, who, after fighting for a year, were beginning to tire of a contest which they began to realise could bring them neither gain nor glory. The manifesto of the Executive Committee of the German Socialist Party, which was published in the *Vorwärts* on June 26th, may be said faithfully to represent the opinions of the bulk of the lower classes in Germany, who acquiesced in the war when it was declared, not from any desire for it, but because they had been hypnotised by the evil spirit of Militarism which took possession of the German people after the successful war of 1870-71, and has been worshipped as a national fetish for the past forty years—

"We raise anew the sharpest protest against all efforts and declarations in favour of annexation of any portion of a foreign country, and the suppression by force of another people, as suggested in the speeches of certain political personages. The mere expression of such a policy pushes further and further off a realisation of the fervent desire for peace. The people desire no annexations. The people desire peace. In the name of humanity and culture, supported by the bravery of our men in arms, who have created a favourable situation, we demand of the Government that it shall announce its willingness to enter into negotiations for peace in order to make an end of this bloody struggle."

The publication of the manifesto led to the suspension of the

ending journal for a period of five days, but the views of the Socialist Committee are on record, and indicate a loss of faith in German invincibility. This being a war, not of armies, but of nations, it is more necessary to know what the people think than what their rulers want, for without their support the military machine would sooner or later fall to pieces. Hence the significance of the manifesto, which is a first step towards national repentance, and the repudiation of force in its application to a conquered nation.

Turning now to the military situation we find that, in spite of some untoward appearances, it was at the end of the first year's war wholly favourable to the ultimate success of the Allies. When the Emperor of Germany, choosing his own time, decided for war in August 1914, he relied on the magnitude and perfection of his military organisation to carry out the plan of campaign which he and his Staff had elaborated with an industry and forethought worthy of a better cause. His plan was to beat France first and Russia afterwards, and then, turning on Great Britain, to deal with her in the same way. The plan was upset from the first by the intervention of Great Britain. With his eyes blinded by the phantom of world-power the Emperor assumed that we should commit the same mistake which his great-grandfather, Frederick William III, committed in 1805 when he looked on, while Napoleon defeated his friends whom he refused to assist. His blundering diplomacy saved Europe from the fate awaiting her. Quick to appreciate the position, with the approval of the Cabinet and nation, Sir Edward Grey took a decision as momentous in consequences as it was correct in inspiration. Instead of waiting for the attack to come when it suited Germany to make it he met the approaching danger with a declaration of war, and then contracted with France and Russia to make no peace except by joint agreement. Ready at sea, we were unready on land, but this did not deter us from immediate action. The Fleet was forthwith set in motion, and in a few weeks the seas were swept clear of the enemy's ships, and Germany was cut off from intercourse with the outer world. Though we had no national army approaching the strength of Continental armies we had, in the Expeditionary Force, an efficient advanced guard of not more than 150,000 men, but just as thoroughly organised as the immense German army, and, being composed of seasoned soldiers, it was superior in fighting strength to any of the Emperor's troops. This little army, insignificant in numbers, but perfectly trained and of undaunted spirit, was sent to

France and given the post of honour on the left flank of the Allied line. What took place is fresh in the memory of all who recall to mind those anxious days last August when the German armies broke through Belgium and started on their march to Paris. It is no slur on our gallant Allies to say that it was Sir John French's "contemptible little army" which saved the military situation by preventing the left flank of the Allies being rolled up, and giving time for General Joffre to fall back on his reserves.

The ignoble outburst of German hatred of Great Britain, always latent but purposely suppressed, dates from the battle of Mons, when four British Divisions held up a German army of three times their strength, striking it with heavy blows, and when overwhelmed by superior numbers, fighting a succession of rearguard battles back to the valley of the Marne. Then it was that the Emperor began to realise that we meant to attack him by land as well as by sea, and that in bidding for hegemony in Europe he would have to reckon with the armed strength of the whole British Empire. Thenceforward fear took the place of contempt, and the sense of approaching failure found an outlet in those many official and private expressions of anger which have fallen into British hands through the medium of captured prisoners of war. The "blind wild beast of force" was still there, raging with impotent desire, and maddened by disappointed lust, but with clipped claws, and with its power to do evil weakened beyond hope of recovery.

Another cause which contributed to the failure of the German plan of campaign was the unexpected military preparedness of the Russian Army. The German General Staff counted on getting a six weeks' start in France before the Russians would be able to advance from their concentration rendezvous behind the Bug. The Emperor expected to be in Paris on September 1st, and in Warsaw on October 1st, and in order to carry out this programme, as laid down in the time-table prepared by his Staff, he sent the great bulk of his first line and reserve corps to the western frontier of Germany in order to deal the French an irrevocable blow of such crushing force as to put further resistance out of the question.¹ To everybody's surprise, and

¹ According to French official reports, out of twenty-five first line, and thirty-three Reserve Corps, which the German Staff mobilised within the first fortnight after declaration of war, twenty-one of the former and twenty-two of the latter were sent to the West along with eight Landwehr Corps giving a total of fifty-one corps in all. Reckoning cavalry and troops for the lines of communication, Germany had not less than 2,500,000 men on her western frontier at the end of the third week in August, as against 1,500,000

nuch to the mortification of the Emperor, a Russian Army under General Rennenkampf's command crossed the frontier of East Prussia during the first week of the war, while the Grand Duke Nicholas's main army advancing from the Bug reached the line of the Ivangorod-Lublin-Cholm railway before the Austro-Hungarian concentration in Galicia had been completed. The Russian invasion of East Prussia compelled the Emperor to detach troops to the east just when they were most wanted for the campaign in the west, and when we look back on the share taken by Russia in the early part of the war we must not forget to give credit to the Grand Duke for his first invasion of East Prussia, which, in spite of the disaster at Tannenberg, helped to take the pressure off Paris, and did its part in compelling the German armies in France to retire from the Marne valley.

It is correct to say that when the German armies were driven from the Marne to the Aisne last September the ultimate issue of the campaign was prospectively decided against them, for it is an old military axiom, as true to-day as it always has been, that when a commander once relinquishes the initiative he can never recover it. Since the middle of September 1914 the German armies of the west have been standing on their defence, counter-attacking the Allies whenever necessary to prevent their line being pierced, local commanders here and there trying to obtain a tactical success, but without any attempt being made to resume the strategical offensive, which at the opening of the campaign enabled them to over-run Belgium and the northern provinces of France, before the Allies were ready to oppose them. The Battle of the Marne was in this sense the most decisive battle yet fought, for it put an end to the further invasion of France, saved Paris from occupation, and took it out of the power of the Emperor to dictate a treaty of peace, without which his plans of conquest fell to the ground. What he did was to substitute for his plan of attack a plan of defence, which has for its object to make use of conquered territory for the purpose of bargaining for peace. This plan, like his first, was doomed to failure, for no bargain can be struck till the Germans have retired from both France and Belgium,

which were all the French Staff were able to bring into the field to repel an immediate attack. Owing to uncertainty as to the direction from which the attack would come, the French plan was to concentrate Reserve Armies at certain rendezvous considerably in rear of the frontier, and this was done; but these Armies were not available for the front line when the Germans launched their attack through Belgium.

and found refuge behind their own Rhine frontier. "So long," said Sir Edward Carson, when speaking for the Cabinet at Guildhall on July 9th, "as an enemy soldier continues on French, Belgian, or Russian soil no question of peace can enter into the thoughts of any honest, patriotic, and courageous man in this country. It is our primary duty towards our Allies to see this matter through with them, and we will at whatever cost."¹

Failing in the west, the Germans concentrated effort in the eastern theatre of war, where the Russians, after conquering Galicia from Austria, were threatening Hungary with invasion. Unless Germany came to the rescue of her ally it was uncertain whether the alliance between the two Central Powers, which had been shaken by the early collapse of the Austro-Hungarian armies in Galicia, could be maintained, and it was even suggested that Hungary might follow Italy's example, and denounce the treaty which linked her to Austria, for there is no love lost between Magyar and Austrian, and the Dual Monarchy holds together not for the common purposes of political development, but solely for mutual defence. Then again the Balkan States were watching the course of events in a state of armed neutrality which might at any moment be changed into active intervention on the side of the Allies. For these reasons it was important for Germany to secure a military success against Russia, and this accounts for the tremendous efforts which she made during the winter of 1914 and early spring months of 1915, to prepare for the invasion of Galicia and Russian Poland. Owing to these efforts the Germans won a temporary success, but the wastage of life was out of all proportion to the gains obtained. Heavy as the Russian losses were, those of the Germans must have been heavier, for they were advancing and attacking while their opponents were retiring and defending. The Russians claimed, and probably with truth, that during the months of May and June the Germans lost more than 250,000 killed and wounded men, besides the prisoners who fell into their hands. Russia for the moment lost Galicia, but the Germans gained no Sedan. Their battles were all Pyrrhic victories. The Grand Duke Nicholas always avoided decisive contests. He held on to his positions long enough to compel his adversary

¹ Equally decided were the words of the French Prime Minister when speaking in Paris on April 14th: "So long as it is necessary to fight, France will fight. In common with her Allies, she will not contemplate the idea of peace until together with them she has driven the aggressor from the soil of Belgium, regained her own territorial integrity, and by a joint effort freed Europe from Prussian militarism."

to deploy his forces, and he then retired protected by his rear-guards. He repeated these tactics, not once, but continuously, during the year's campaign, and the skill with which he manœuvred his armies is beyond all praise. There is no more difficult task for a commander than to withdraw his army from the battle-line without committing it to a decisive encounter, but this is what the Russian Generalissimo did with unfailing success. The Germans were no nearer their goal in August 1915 than they were twelve months before, but on the contrary day by day they were receding from it, for our fifth ally, Time, was beginning to assert its influence, and promising in another year to be the dominant factor of the gigantic war problem which is being fought out in Europe.

In the month of August 1915, when the Russians were retiring before the German invaders of their country, a wave of pessimism broke over this country, and found expression in a certain section of the London Press. Surprise was expressed because the German line in the western theatre of war was still practically intact, in spite of the vigorous offensive onslaughts which have been directed with such superb *élan* and heroism by our French Allies, and in a lesser degree by our own brave troops, against various points of the enemy's front. If the Germans were able to drive the Russians out of Galicia, why could not the British, French, and Belgians combined drive the Germans out of France and Belgium? It was known that German troops had been taken from the west to strengthen General Mackensen's army in the east. Surely this was the opportunity for the Allies to undertake that long-promised "big offensive" which had never yet taken place. The spring had gone by, the summer was passing away, autumn was approaching, and the winter was looming in the near distance with the hideous horrors of the trenches over again. Why had there been no offensive? The Allies would never get a better chance than they had let go by, for when the Germans had finally disposed of the Russians, Mackensen would counter-march his victorious "phalanx" to the west, and hack his way to Paris, or, what would be worse for us, to Calais and Dunkirk.

There was no difficulty in answering pessimistic criticism of this kind, for it was uninformed, non-observant, superficial, and not based on a correct appreciation of the situation as it then existed. It was all a question of guns and munitions. "It is only their artillery," writes a correspondent from the trenches, "which is saving the Germans. Take that away,

and let the infantry fight, and the war would soon be over." This was the literal truth. Mackensen's success on the Dunajec river at the beginning of May, and subsequently in his advance through Galicia, was due to his having brought up an overwhelming mass of heavy and light guns against the positions occupied by the army of General Demetrius. Without those guns, and the ammunition required for their service, his "phalanx" would never have hacked its way to Przemyśl and Lemberg, and it was because there was a difficulty in transporting artillery without the aid of railways through the southern part of Russian Poland that he and the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand were held up for so long within a day's march of the Ivangorod-Lublin-Cholm railway. If Sir John French's artillerymen had been supplied with a sufficiency of ammunition on May 9th the Germans would not have been in La Bassée, and Lille would have been in British occupation. As it was the French offensive north of Arras was not supported by a correspondingly sustained British attack south of the Lys river, and the German line, though pushed back, was still unbroken. Big battalions are now as necessary as ever, but they must be supported by big batteries, or their efforts will be wasted. This was the great lesson of the war, and without going back on the past it was satisfactory to know that we and our Allies not only learnt it, but were rapidly taking steps to apply its teaching to the future conduct of the campaign.

If this war had been fought out a quarter of a century ago the Germans would before now have been driven behind their frontier, but the development of science has so strengthened the power of the tactical defence that when a position has once been won it can be defended much more easily than it can be captured. Machine-guns and magazine rifles have revolutionised tactics. The Germans owed their initial successes to the numbers of their guns, and especially of their machine-guns, even more than to the numbers of their men, and the perfection of their organisation. Multiplication of machine-guns had enabled them to defend the positions they won in the autumn of 1914, but not to attack the positions in front of them. Herein lay the weakness of their situation. An invading army cannot stand still indefinitely: it must either advance, or retire, and the latter alternative is the one which the Germans would have to face, not perhaps to-day, nor to-morrow, but so soon as the Allies had obtained a preponderance in the ammunition supply necessary to break down the enemy's resistance. This is what

Mr. Churchill meant when he spoke of Time being one of our most powerful Allies.

How did the rival belligerent nations stand after twelve months' war as regards comparative resources available for carrying on the struggle? Economics had better be left out of consideration. When the war broke out financial experts declared that, cut off from the outside world, Germany would be a bankrupt State after six months of fighting. Twelve months passed away, and there was no immediate indication of exhaustion. The time must come when economic pressure will have its say on the duration of the war, but it had not arrived at the end of the first years' war. With regard to numbers of men, numerous calculations were made by various authorities, but they cannot be said to be even approximately trustworthy, or worth much more than guess work, so difficult is it to get information, so carefully do nations conceal numerical statistics of strength and losses. Germany was the main factor of the problem because the war was the result of her aggressive policy in Europe, and when her resources are exhausted it will come to an automatic end. A carefully considered estimate of German military strength was given in the French official review, which was published in April 1915, and which put the numbers of German troops in organised formations fighting on both fronts on January 1st, 1915, at 4,000,000. The definite loss after five months of war, and after deducting from the casualty list those wounded men who were fit to rejoin the colours, was put down at 1,800,000, or 260,000 a month, and it was assumed that this rate of wastage would at least be maintained during the rest of the war. The total permanent loss up to the 15th August 1915 would consequently be 8,120,000. According to the German official recruiting returns there were 9,000,000 effective men of fighting age available for mobilisation, and after subtracting the permanent losses from this number, there remained 5,188,000, of which number 4,000,000 were in the field. This only left 1,188,000 men for new formations, and to replace casualties, which meant that in rather more than seven months from August 1915 there would be no men left in reserve, and the field armies would gradually dwindle away till they were too weak to continue resistance.

The above calculation was probably correct up to a certain point, but it was too optimistic, for it took no account of men above and below the fighting age (twenty to forty), and we know that the German Staff are using large numbers of boys

under twenty, and elderly men up to the age of sixty, and have even called out all their retired officers under the age of sixty-five. As the male population of Germany amounts to 32,000,000, and every one, whatever his age if physically fit to do so, is required either by law or by official pressure to take up arms, it follows that an addition should have been made to the figures of the French official reviewer, bringing the total number of men available on an emergency up to perhaps as many as twelve instead of nine millions. The quality of the men, of course, depreciate as the war continues, but in the German Army quality counts for less than in other European Armies, owing to the superiority of the German *matériel*, which discounts the defects in the *personnel*.

The French losses have never been officially published, but in July 1915 an unofficial estimate of casualties was given by the Committee of the French Relief Fund, the number of killed being returned as 400,000, the permanently disabled 700,000, and prisoners 800,000, amounting to a total loss up to July 1st of 1,400,000 or in round numbers 127,000 a month. This was less than half the German loss, but the Germans were fighting on two fronts, and the French only on one, while German tactics are more wasteful of life than those of our Allies. We were told officially by the French Government that on January 15th, 1915, there were 2,500,000 men in the fighting line, and half as many again in the depots, since when 500,000 men of the 1915 class were called out, while more than a million of men of varying ages came forward as volunteers. Deducting permanent losses the above figures showed that the effective strength of the French Army on the 1st August, 1915, was 4,000,000, and that France could go on fighting for another two years without any weakening of the units in the field. There were not enough men available for fresh formations, but General Joffre has told us that the field *cadres* (2,500,000) are sufficient for the purpose of either offence or defence, and he had no intention of adding to them.

In August 1915 Great Britain was still only putting her armour on, her policy since the Napoleonic War having been, not to attack her neighbours, but to defend herself, and for this purpose, as an island Power, all she required was a strong Navy for the protection of her shores and commerce, and an Expeditionary Force which could be used as an advanced guard to seize and hold strategic points till there was time to raise an army of sufficient strength to fight on the Continent. This was the basic principle of Imperial Defence as laid down by the

committee charged with its consideration. There has been a great deal of uninstructed talk about the mistake we made in not listening to Lord Roberts when he asked for a Home Defence Army of a million strong. If we had only had such an army, say the critics, Belgium would never have been invaded, and the Germans would long ago have been driven behind their frontier. As to this it is to be noted that Lord Roberts only asked for a local army to defend England from invasion—a task which is being effectively performed by the Navy—and he always protested against the suggestions of his opponents that he wanted his army for service abroad. In any case, no British Army, however strong, could have saved Belgium from being overrun by the Germans, who had for years past made preparations to go through the country as soon as war was declared. Our War Office and Admiralty, working together, succeeded in landing five divisions of the Expeditionary Force in France, but not till after Liège had fallen, and Brussels had been occupied. To have landed an army quick enough, and large enough, to have met the Germans coming through Belgium during the first fortnight in August would have been an impracticable task, as is well known to all who are acquainted with mobilisation details.

How did we stand for men at the end of the first year's war? Setting aside our Oversea Dominions, all of which were preparing to put forth their whole strength, out of the male population of the United Kingdom alone, which amounts to 22,000,000, there were nearly 8,000,000 men between the ages of twenty and forty. Of this number we mobilised since then 8,000,000, and after striking off 2,000,000—a very conservative estimate—as physically unfit for military service, or as otherwise employed on industrial work for the war, there remained on the lowest computation, 8,000,000 young men who were still available for the colours as soon as the Army Council was ready for them. The British losses up to June 1st in the two Expeditionary Forces fighting under Sir John French and Sir Ian Hamilton respectively were stated by the Prime Minister to have been 50,000 killed, 54,000 missing, and 154,000 wounded. Assuming that half the wounded returned to duty, these figures show the total permanent loss, after ten months' war, to be 181,000 men, or, in round numbers, 18,000 a month. The wastage would increase as the armies increased, but supposing it to be double, or even treble, what it has been, it is obvious that when we compare losses with resources we can continue the war just as long as is necessary to accomplish the purpose for

CHAPTER XVI

August 18th to September 18th

1915

Operations in the Gallipoli Peninsula—Failure to win through to the Straits—The 9th Corps at Suvla Bay—Development of British Air Service—Zeppelin raid on London—British prepare for another offensive in France—French air raids—Converging movement of the Italians on Trent—Russians continue their retreat in Poland—Evacuation of Grodno—Fall of Brest Litovsk—Evacuation of Vilna—Struggle for the strategic railway—Emperor Nicholas assumes command of the Russian Armies—Transfer of the Grand Duke to the Caucasus.

ON August 18th, the day down to which the record of the war was carried in the last chapter, a report was received from Sir Ian Hamilton giving his first and preliminary account of the new phase of the operations in the Gallipoli Peninsula, which began on August 6th with the landing of a fresh British Corps of two divisions at Suvla Bay. The Commander-in-Chief told us that the landing was well planned, and carried out by the Navy entirely to his satisfaction, but in spite of the fact that the Turks developed their greatest strength in the Anzac region the Suvla Bay troops were unable to make "satisfactory progress" before the enemy's reinforcements arrived, and brought the advance to a standstill.

On August 25th a further and more detailed report was received from the Commander-in-Chief giving a general retrospective account of the August operations. Three simultaneous attacks were made on August 6th: one by the Southern Force towards Krithia, another by the Australian and New Zealand Corps from Anzac Cove, and the third by the 9th Corps which had landed in Suvla Bay, and of which Sir Ian Hamilton had already told us something in his report of August 18th. The southern attack was undertaken as a diversion, and was not pushed home, the main attack being directed against the Sari Bair and Anafarta ridges by the forces operating respectively from Anzac and Suvla Bay. After a series of what General Hamilton described as "desperately contested actions,"

the Anzac attacking troops reached the summit of Chunuk Bair, and from there looked down on the Dardanelles, and had the Suvla Bay corps been equally successful in reaching the Anafarta heights Sir Ian Hamilton's object would have been gained, and the Achi Baba position turned. Unfortunately, to quote the words of the Commander-in-Chief, "the attack from Suvla was not developed quickly enough," and when the New Zealanders and Gurkhas reached the top of Chunuk Bair they found themselves enfiladed from the Anafarta hills, and had to seek cover below the crest of the hill which they had won. Then there was a pause in the operations, which were not renewed till August 21st, when the Suvla corps was given another chance of storming the Anafarta position, but the attack again failed, and though ground was gained and held, the main objective was not reached, and the Turks remained entrenched on the top of the Anafarta and Sari Bair ridges.¹

On the same day that Sir Ian Hamilton's second report was published a despatch dated August 18th arrived from Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, and this was followed at short intervals by further despatches dated August 12th, 19th, and 23rd, which when put together filled in the gaps left in the official report, and unfolded the whole story of the most tremendous struggle in which British troops have been engaged since the Battle of Inkerman. In his first three letters Mr. Bartlett described the five-day battle, which began on August 6th and ended on the 10th, while in his fourth letter he gave a clear and succinct account of the attempt of the Suvla corps to storm the Anafarta heights on August 21st. There was much left to record, for Mr. Bartlett was debarred from mentioning either corps or individuals by name, but what he wrote at the time gave the public a general idea of the great battle and its results.

Koja Chemin Dagh is the highest point of the Sari Bair ridge, but it was judged impossible to storm so commanding a position by a frontal attack, and it was consequently arranged to attack it by moving up the spurs of Chunuk Bair which run down into the Biyuk Anafarta valley. For this purpose a large quantity of ammunition was transferred unknown to the Turks to the Asma Dere ravine, where the bulk of the troops, Australians, New Zealanders, and Indians, were concentrated by daybreak on August 6th, the intention being to start the attack

¹ This brief *précis* account of these operations will be supplemented by further remarks when Sir Ian Hamilton's despatch comes under review in Chapter XIX of this volume.

on Koja Chemin at the same time as the attack from Suvla on the Anafarta hills. Up to the day for which the attack was planned the Turks were ignorant of the British Commander's intentions, and their reserves were kept at Bulair, uncertain where their presence would be required. Success depended on two conditions : surprise and co-operation between the two forces which were charged with the undertaking. The first condition existed, but not the second, as we have already seen from Sir Ian Hamilton's report, and as was more conclusively shown after a study of Mr. Bartlett's despatches.

To assist the main operation, and divert attention southwards, the Australian division on the right of the line was ordered to seize a position which is known as Lone Pine, situated on the summit of a plateau 400 feet high south-east of Anzac Cove. The Turks were quite aware of the value of this position, and had turned it into a veritable fortress. After a preparatory bombardment both by land and sea, the position was successfully stormed on the morning of August 6th by the Australians, who won and held it against repeated counter-attacks, which were continued with extreme violence for three days and nights, and in which the Turks are reported to have lost 5000 killed and wounded men.

While this subsidiary battle for the Lone Pine plateau was going on the main attack on Sari Bair was being carried out by the other Australian Division along with the New Zealanders and Indian troops who had been concentrated north of Fisher-man's Hut. Whether owing to the delay in the advance of the Suvla force, or for some other reason, the attack which had been prepared for daybreak was postponed till 9 p.m. on the night of the 6th, when the troops, opposed only by Turkish snipers, moved up the lower slopes of Chunuk Bair, and by dawn on the 7th had got within striking distance of the summit. Then a halt was called for the day, the advance not being resumed till 4 a.m. on the 8th, by which time the Turks had assembled in great strength on both the Anafarta and Sari Bair ridgeways, and little progress could be made. The Australians on the left were held up altogether, while the New Zealanders with the Indians on their left met with such stubborn opposition that they had to get under cover till nightfall. In the afternoon a Territorial Brigade was brought up to reinforce the attacking troops, and on the morning of the 9th the Gurkhas and New Zealanders reached the summit of Chunuk Bair, from where they looked down on the Dardanelles five miles away. They held their ground all the day and night,

but on the morning of the 10th the Turks counter-attacked them in such overwhelming force that, as has already been seen, they had to abandon the position they had won.

What the Suvla Bay corps was doing all this time will be best told when Sir Ian Hamilton's despatch is discussed in Chapter XIX of this volume. From Mr. Bartlett's report we know that by dawn on the 6th two complete divisions were firmly established ashore on both spits of the bay, and along the narrow neck running across the front of the Salt Lake. Then there was an unaccountable delay of twelve hours, no forward move being made till 5 p.m. Eventually the two divisions were deployed along a line facing the Anafarta ridge-way, the right resting on Yighlin Burnu (Chocolate Hill), which was captured on the night of the 6th, and the left on the Karakol Dag, overlooking the Gulf of Saros, but the advantage of the first surprise was relinquished owing to the delay which occurred in beginning the assault on Anafarta. On the two following days some slight progress was made, but by this time the Turks were reinforced at all points, and on the 9th the forward movement came to a standstill without any determined attempt having been made to storm the Anafarta position. By the evening of the 10th the two new divisions held a trench line across the flat country facing the hills at a distance of about two and a half miles from the landing place, contact with the left of the Anzac troops having been established at Yighlin Burnu, and the whole front occupied by the combined forces being about twelve miles in length.

If we look at the map accompanying this chapter we see at once how tactically interdependent were the Anafarta and Sari Bair positions. One cannot be occupied without the other. If the Suvla corps had been able to get on to the Anafarta plateau simultaneously with the arrival of the Gurkhas and New Zealanders on the crest of Chunuk Bair the two positions could have been held together, but as it turned out the latter troops had to choose between the alternatives of retreat or annihilation, and their commander wisely withdrew them from an untenable position. The Commander-in-Chief expressed himself as disappointed with the execution of his carefully considered plan of campaign, and said enough in his telegraphic reports to indicate where in his opinion responsibility lay. "The original plan failed," wrote Mr. Ashmead Bartlett on August 23rd, "just as the most carefully laid plans will often go wrong in war, because a corps failed to carry out the task assigned to it of pushing through with a rush when the enemy

was completely surprised, and had only a few battalions of picked troops to oppose our advance."

When a renewal of the attack on Anafarta was ordered on



August 21st the Suvla corps showed no want of élan, and made a frontal attack on the Turkish position between Hills 112 and 70 with a heroism which is beyond all praise. But the task allotted to the corps was an impossible one. Hill 112 could not be approached through the hurricane of fire which

was poured from it on to the attacking force, and though Hill 70 was partially occupied after a tremendous struggle, in which the Nottingham and Derbyshire Yeomanry played a distinguished part, it could not be held except at prohibitive cost, and during the night the troops were withdrawn to their original positions. The only chance of success in the circumstances described was surprise, and when that was non-existent defeat was inevitable, so great is the power of the defensive in modern war.

After the Hooze affair on the 9th and 10th August there was practically no further infantry fighting on the British front during the latter half of August and the first half of September, Sir John French's operations having been confined to intermittent artillery bombardments brought on by the local artillery commanders without any particular tactical purpose to serve. A considerable increase of activity, however, was noticeable in the air department, the tendency being to conduct raids with massed squadrons of aeroplanes instead of with detached machines flying independently. On August 26th sixty aeroplanes picked from the Allies' air departments, both naval and military, were concentrated behind the British front, and made a concerted raid on the Forest of Houthulst, eight miles north of Ypres, where it was known that the Germans had collected large stores of food and munitions. On the same day Commander A. W. Bigsworth, R.N., attacked a German submarine single-handed, and according to an Admiralty *communiqué* caused it to sink. The naval and military wings of the Royal Flying Corps were both developed to such an extent during the first year of war that it was found necessary to increase the number of superior commanders. On the military side two wing commanders, Colonel Hugh M. Trenchard, C.B., D.S.O., and Lieut.-Colonel John F. A. Higgins, D.S.O., were advanced to the rank of Brigadier-General, while a new director, Rear-Admiral C. L. Vaughan-Lee, was appointed to take charge of the Naval Air Service, the former director, Commander M. F. Sueter, C.B., being promoted Commodore, first class, and appointed as Superintendent of Air-Craft Construction. The reorganisation of the higher command of the Air Service indicated an intention to make more use of massed aeroplanes for raiding purposes, while for reconnaissance work the individual pilot with his observer was best left to his own resources.

The Zeppelin raid on London on September 8th showed up the weakness of the then existing organisation for the defence

of the Metropolis against air-craft attack. There were too few anti-aircraft guns, and what few were available came into action independently, and without any attempt to secure combined fire control. To get the best effect from artillery, whether firing in the air, on the sea, or on the land, the fire must be subject to the direction of one commander, but on the occasion under notice all guns were firing together, and it was consequently impossible for any particular gun-commander to observe the results of his fire, or to know whether or not he had found the range of the target. The bombardment was a failure, and the Zeppelin escaped unhurt. Another error which has since been corrected was the superfluity of light, and the absence of any order to extinguish the street lamps when the Zeppelin's arrival was announced. Lamps have since been shaded, and in many cases reduced altogether. The inhabitants flocked out of their houses into the streets undismayed by the appearance of their unwelcome visitor, but by so doing exposed themselves to being injured, not only by the Zeppelin bombs, but by fragments of shrapnel shell falling from the anti-aircraft guns. The appointment of Admiral Sir Percy Scott to take charge of the gun defences of London was an assurance that for the future the defence would be in highly competent hands.

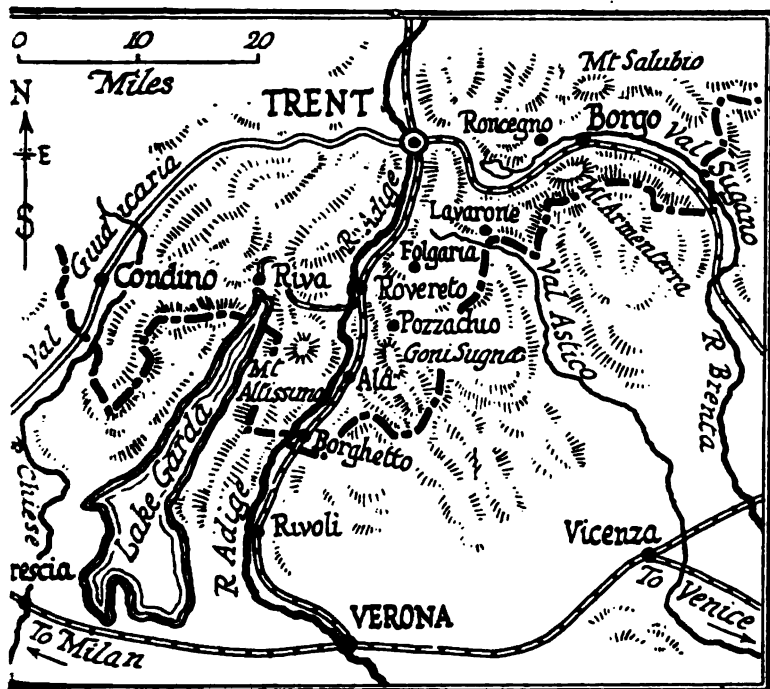
Although there was little or no fighting on the British front, it must not be supposed that Sir John French and his army were inactive, for the month under review was one of preparation, and all accounts go to show that an immense deal was done, not only to consolidate the existing defensive positions, and render them absolutely immune from attack, but also to organise the reinforcements of troops for further offensive operations. On September 15th Lord Kitchener announced in the House of Lords that the British Army had taken over seventeen miles of additional front, relieving the French of that much of their occupied front. It is easy to understand that this transfer of charge must have absorbed a great deal of the time at the disposal of the Field-Marshal's Staff, and diverted attention from other directions. If the problem had merely consisted of marching one army on to the new ground, and marching another off it, there would have been no difficulty in solving it; but the transfer of charge meant more than this, and could only be effected after an exhaustive preliminary inspection of the portion of the front to be occupied by the Generals and their Staff who were to be charged with its defence. The opposing lines are actually opposing fortresses, on the construction and improvement of which the accumulated

experience of a whole year has been brought to bear by our engineers. "Swopping horses in the middle of the stream" is always difficult work, and especially when, as in this case, the change had to be concealed from the enemy lest there should be any break in the continuity of the defence.

No forward movement was made by the French armies between the dates mentioned at the head of this chapter, but their artillery was very active all along the front occupied, and so also were the attacks of their airmen, whose ceaseless raids on railway stations and munition works in towns beyond the frontier were the subject of daily report. Their most notable achievement was on August 25th, when a flotilla of four detachments of aeroplanes, sixty-two in number, flew over the iron works at Dillingen, north of Saarlouis, and dropped 150 bombs into the factories. This was followed up on the night of the 26th by a raid on the asphyxiating gas works at Dornach, and next day by another raid on Mulheim in the Grand Duchy of Baden. On the night of the 28th French aviators bombarded the German works at Ostend, and made attacks on the railway stations at Lens, Tergnier, and other places. On September 18th a French squadron flew over Trèves, and dropped 100 bombs on the railway station and Reichbank. These air attacks, which gradually grew in strength, could not fail to be very harassing to the enemy, besides causing damage to plant and war material. A notable feature of the air war during this period was the decided preponderance of French over German aviators.

Fighting on the ground was chiefly confined to the Argonne and the Vosges, but without leading to any change in the situation. In the former locality the Crown Prince was restlessly active, but he had nothing to show for his repeated attacks. On September 8th and 9th, with the aid of asphyxiating gas, he launched two divisions against the French positions between Vienne-le-Château and Le Four de Paris, but in spite of a determined attack there was no appreciable gain of ground by the Germans. In Alsace the enemy's efforts were concentrated on the defence of Münster, which the French were gradually enveloping on the south, west, and north. On August 28th the French operating on the north of the town secured possession of the crest of the Linge Kopf-Barren Kopf ridgeway, and held their ground against repeated German counter-attacks, but Münster lies right down in the Felsberg valley, and the whole of the surrounding heights would have to be captured before the French could occupy the town.

If General Cadorna had no striking successes to record for a month's work he was able to report progress all along the front occupied, and especially on the Trentino frontier, where Italian troops advanced along three main routes which converge on the Adige valley from the Italian plain. The sketch below shows the direction which these routes take through the Val Giudicaria on the western face of the Trentino salient, up the Adige on the south side, and along the Val Sugano on the



Western front. The Val Giudicaria is the highway into the Tyrol from Brescia, and on their side of it are fortified positions nearly the whole way to Trent. During the first week of the war the Italians, taking the Austrians by surprise, seized Condino (see sketch) by a *coup de main*, and compelled the Austrian garrison to fall back on the second line of defence higher up the valley. Then our Allies began to secure the position gained by constructing defensive works covering the road approaches to Brescia, and linking these up with other defensive positions extending along the entire front from the Stelvio Pass to

Gulf. These marines were intended to be the advanced guard of a larger force which was to be landed at Pernau as soon as a foothold had been secured on shore. The expedition ended in a *fiasco*. After a four-days' battle the German fleet was badly beaten by the Russian Admiral, who turned on the enemy's ships after he had drawn them into the Gulf, and compelled them to retreat to the Baltic with the loss of two cruisers and eight torpedo craft. The defeat of the fleet left the marines an easy prey to the guns defending Pernau, and they all surrendered before putting foot on shore. The expedition was ill-conceived and badly planned. Before attempting a landing it was necessary to destroy the Russian fleet and obtain command of the Gulf waters, but the German Commander put the cart before the horse, and tried to land his marines while a Russian fleet was still "in being." The expedition failed ignominiously, as all such expeditions must fail when they are planned and executed in defiance of the laws of maritime warfare.

Brest Litovsk fell on August 25th. Few details have been published about its surrender, but in the Berlin *communiqué* of the 26th it was stated that Marshal von Arz, who commanded an Army Corps in Mackensen's group, reached the fortress from the west, while the Brandenburg Reserve Corps stormed the fortifications on the north-west, and entered the fortress on the night of the 25th. The Russian Commander-in-Chief subsequently denied that there had been any assault, and stated that the fortress had been voluntarily evacuated in accordance with intention, after time had been given to withdraw the garrison, and carry off or destroy the immense quantity of stores which had been collected in the place. The Russian report appears to have been the correct one, since the enemy admittedly entered a dead city, in which they found no booty of any kind, everything having been carried away or burnt. The following is the description of what the war correspondent of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* saw when he entered the city on the 26th with the Austrian advanced guard—

"We entered the fortress and city of Brest Litovsk with the first troops—the 20th Austro-Hungarian Regiment. All the heavy guns had been removed. The nearer we approached the town, the clearer it became that the Russians had done all they said they would do, and had set fire to everything before leaving. The whole town was one sea of fire. Without exception, high, solid, two- and three-storey houses had been set

alight in the early morning. Brest was a town of 58,000 inhabitants. It does not exist any more."

It was suggested by the military critics in Berlin that when Hindenburg had secured the Niemen-Bug line he would call a halt in order to give his troops the rest they required after their sustained efforts during the summer campaign; but if this was ever his intention it was abandoned after he had failed to achieve a decisive success over the Russian armies. Those armies, though weakened by defeat, were still intact, and had to be reckoned with during the coming winter. The Germans had either gone too far, or not far enough. If they stayed where they were, with an unbroken enemy in front of them, they would be exposed to Russian attacks all along their front, and instead of resting from their labours and recuperating their strength, they would have to pass the winter in fighting which would know no end. The invasion may have been a mistake, but it was too late to go back on an error to which Hindenburg had committed his troops. The Germans were obliged to see the invasion through, and to secure their position as invaders the Russian armies must be broken up, and driven behind the Dwina and Dnieper rivers. There they would be too far off to do any harm, and meanwhile the Germans could prepare for a spring campaign.

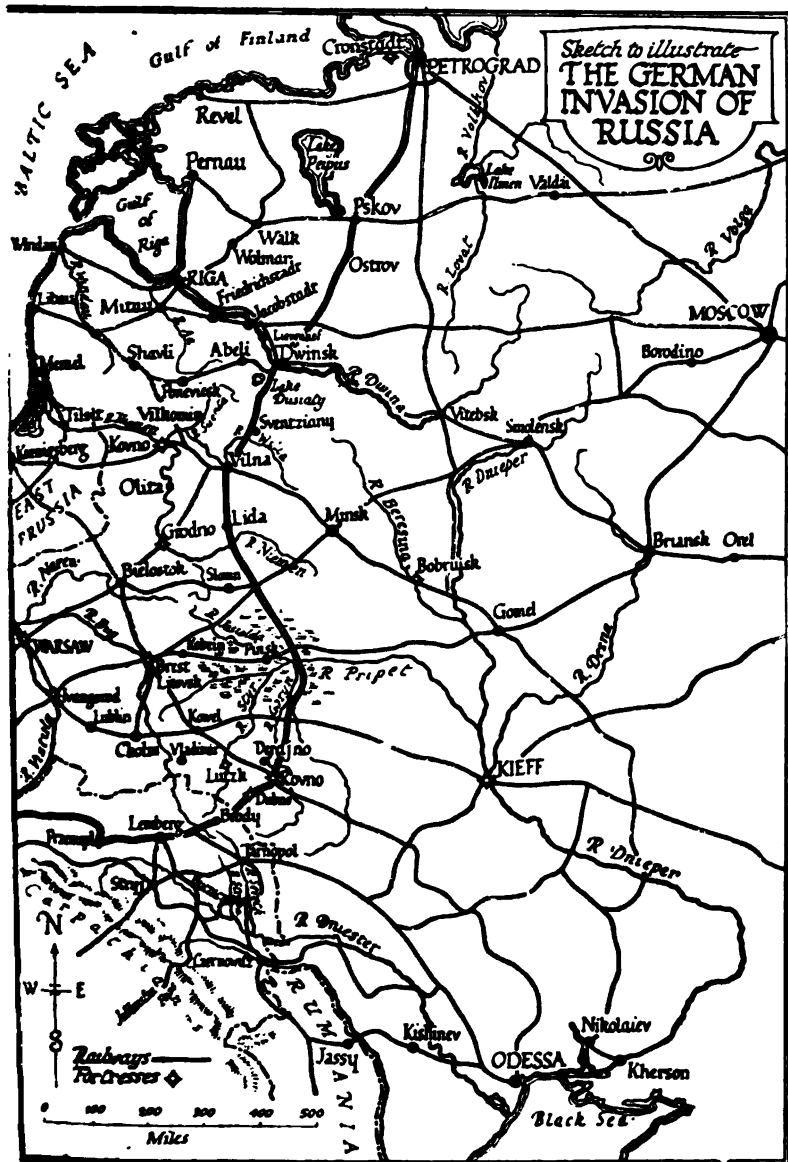
Running nearly due north and south from Dwinsk to Rovno is a double line of railway which, passing through Wilna, Lida, and Sarny, connected together the three groups of Russian armies, commanded respectively by Generals Ruszky, Evert, and Ivanoff, and which had been retiring under the co-operative direction of the late Commander-in-Chief. If the Germans remained on the Niemen-Bug line, they would leave the Russian armies in a very strong position along the trunk railway with their lateral communications secured. If, on the other hand, Hindenburg could push our Allies off this line, the effect would be to break the continuity of the Russian front, and isolate the three army groups, one from the other, for there is no other lateral line of railway communication available this side of the Dwina. Herein lies the significance of the tremendous struggle which went on at this period for possession of the Dwinsk-Rovno railway.

After the fall of Brest Litovsk the advance of the two groups of armies, which formed the centre of the German line, and which were commanded respectively by Prince Leopold of Bavaria and Marshal Mackensen, were delayed partly by

Gulf. These marines were intended to be the advanced guard of a larger force which was to be landed at Pernau as soon as a foothold had been secured on shore. The expedition ended in a *fiasco*. After a four-days' battle the German fleet was badly beaten by the Russian Admiral, who turned on the enemy's ships after he had drawn them into the Gulf, and compelled them to retreat to the Baltic with the loss of two cruisers and eight torpedo craft. The defeat of the fleet left the marines an easy prey to the guns defending Pernau, and they all surrendered before putting foot on shore. The expedition was ill-conceived and badly planned. Before attempting a landing it was necessary to destroy the Russian fleet and obtain command of the Gulf waters, but the German Commander put the cart before the horse, and tried to land his marines while a Russian fleet was still "in being." The expedition failed ignominiously, as all such expeditions must fail when they are planned and executed in defiance of the laws of maritime warfare.

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realised his danger on the 17th, and on that day ordered an immediate retreat of the entire Central Army group. Eichhorn's advanced guards entered Vilna on the 19th, but the Russian army escaped from the trap in which Hindenburg hoped to catch it, and secured its line of retreat.

While these important events were taking place on the northern front, General Ivanoff, who commanded the Russian armies operating south of the Pripet, won two considerable successes in the eastern corner of Galicia, defeating two German divisions on the Dolzanka river, west of Tarnopol, and an Austrian corps at Trembowla on the Sereth, making large captures of prisoners, guns, and war *matériel*. Further fighting ended in the Austrians being driven back to the Strypa, while north of Rovno, General Pulhallo's movement down the Goryn river to link up with Mackensen had been effectually checked. General Ivanoff's firm stand on the Galician frontier at this critical juncture saved the situation, for it was impossible for Mackensen, who had reached Pinsk with some difficulty on the 16th September, to march down the Pripet to Kieff until Ivanoff had been decisively defeated.

The capture of Vilna brought the struggle for the strategical railway to an end by forcing Evert to retire in order to recover his communications with Ruszky. The next line of Russian defence was clearly marked out by the Dwina and Dnieper rivers, but, as will be seen in the following chapter, the Russians turned on the invaders and stopped their further advance into the interior of Russia.

On September 5th the Emperor of Russia announced his intention of taking personal command of his armies, and two days later left Petrograd for the Front. This step may have been politically desirable, but it had the regrettable effect of superseding the Grand Duke Nicholas, who, in spite of reverses, had won the confidence and regard of the whole Russian Army. His appointment as Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief in the Caucasus meant the initiation of an active offensive on the Caucasus front, but this was concealed from public notice when the change of command took place. It was interesting to know that General Yamuskevitch accompanied the Grand Duke to Tiflis, and was replaced as Chief of the Staff on the western front by General Alexeieff; but it is hardly necessary to say that these alterations of *personnel* indicated no change in Russian policy, or weakening of the bond which bound the Allies together for the common purpose of destroying the tyranny of German militarism.

CHAPTER XVII

September 18th to October 18th

1915

Anglo-French offensive on the 25th September—Battle of Loos—French advance in Artois—German counter-attack on the 8th October—General results of this offensive—General Castelnau's victory in Champagne—Battle of Meisagowla—Russian retreat from Vilna—Slackening of the German offensive—General Ivanoff's firm stand in Eastern Galicia—General Russky secures the line of the Dwina—End of the Russian retreat—The campaign in Mesopotamia—Occupation of Kut—Bulgarians mobilise their army—The Russian ultimatum—An Austro-German army invades Serbia—Anglo-French army occupies Salonika—Tardy action of the Allies—Situation beyond their control.

ANGLO-FRENCH OFFENSIVE

THE Paris *communiqué* issued on the night of Saturday, September 25th, conveyed the first news of the beginning of the Anglo-French offensive between the La Bassée Canal and Arras, and of the French offensive in Champagne. According to a secret order issued by General Joffre on September 14th, and found by the Germans on a fallen French officer, the troops engaged in the attack comprised thirty-five divisions under General Castelnau, who had command of the Champagne operations, eighteen divisions under General Foch, who commanded the Tenth French Army, thirteen British divisions under Field-Marshal French, and fifteen cavalry divisions, of which five were British. In addition to these first line troops, twelve infantry divisions and the Belgian Army were held in reserve. Five thousand guns were to be brought into action, 2000 being heavy guns, and 8000 field pieces. Eliminating non-combatants, these formations would yield something like 1,200,000 infantry with 60,000 cavalry, and 100,000 artillerymen. When he issued his first order General Joffre evidently hoped for decisive results, for he followed it up next day with a second order telling Generals commanding divisions that his intention was to "drive the

Germans out of France, liberate those of our countrymen who have been suppressed for the last twelve months, and snatch away from the enemy the valuable possession of the occupied territory."

Operations began at 6.30 a.m. on Saturday, September 25th, the agreed plan of attack being for the 2nd British Army under Sir Douglas Haig to push its way between the La Bassée Canal and Lens, while the French advance was to be made south of Lens, the two forces forming a junction east of the town with the object of surrounding it. With this purpose in view Sir Douglas Haig deployed the 1st Corps under Lieut.-General Hubert Gough between the Canal and Vermelles, while the 4th Corps under Lieut.-General Sir Henry Rawlinson prolonged the line of attack down to Grenay. The order in which the divisions attacked is shown on the sketch. Without entering into tactical details, which are outside the province of this volume, it may be briefly stated that the attack of the first Corps had only a limited success. The 2nd Division was pulled up at the start, and its failure to secure the left flank interfered with the operations of the 9th Division fighting on its right. The 26th Brigade of the latter Division carried the Hohenzollern Redoubt, but failed to reach Haisnes for want of support. The 27th Brigade arrived at 11 a.m., but by that time the Germans had been reinforced. The 7th Division had no better luck. One of its brigades, the 22nd, broke through the German lines into the Quarries, and reached Cité St. Elier, but not being reinforced, it was compelled to withdraw. The attack of the 1st Corps failed.

The 4th Corps did better. The objective of the 1st Division was Hulluch, and that of the 15th Division Cité St. Auguste, while the 47th Division was ordered to secure the right flank of the attacking force. The latter Division carried out its mission as directed, while the 15th Division, advancing with great *élan*, pushed through Loos, the 44th Brigade going over Hill 70 to Cité St. Auguste. There it was heavily counter-attacked, and not being supported fell back behind the crest of Hill 70. The 1st Division was heavily engaged on its way to Hulluch, and reinforcements arriving too late it had to fall back west of the La Bassée-Lens road. The net result of the attack was a gain of from 4000 to 5000 yards of depth along a front of between 4 and 5 miles.

The causes of failure were two. The preliminary bombardment had been only partially effective, many of the German trenches remaining intact, with the wire entanglements *uncut*,

Lake Garda. Visitors to this part of the frontier reported these defences as constituting an impassable barrier to any attempted Austrian invasion on this side of the Trentino. No advance was made beyond Condino, but the position there was firmly secured in anticipation of a future offensive movement along the road to Trent.

Simultaneously with the occupation of Condino an Italian force, based on Verona, moved up both banks of the Adige, crossed the Austrian frontier near Borghetto, and seized Ala with hardly any opposition. Continuing their offensive, the Italians then seized Monte Altissimo and its northern spurs, which command the railway between Riva and Rovereto, and at the same time occupied the important tactical position of Goni Zugna, which is four miles north of Ala, and flanks the Rovereto road. From there an advance was subsequently made to Pozzachio, an unfinished fort eight miles from Rovereto, which was abandoned by the Austrians as soon as the Italian offensive began to develop. A subsidiary force moved at the same time up the Val Astico from Asiero, and succeeded in storming the Austrian positions on Monte Maronia, whence the Italians threatened the main defences of Rovereto on the Lavarone-Folgaria plateau. It will be seen from the sketch that Rovereto is at the junction of three mountain roads leading into Italy in this locality, and has a strategical importance second only to that of Trent. Its subjugation is a necessary preliminary operation before a further advance up the Adige is possible.

The third Italian column directed against Trent moved up the Brenta along the Val Sugano, and at the end of August its advanced guards operating right and left of the valley had reached Monte Salubio on the north and Monte Armentera on the south of Borgo. These heights command the town of Borgo, but as the inhabitants are all Italians the place was not occupied lest this should lead to its bombardment by the Austrian artillery. Recent reports, however, show that the Austrian commander has not spared the town, which has been repeatedly bombarded by the enemy's guns north of Roncegno. Borgo is only eighteen miles from Trent, and is almost within striking distance of the great Tyrol fortress.

On other fronts the campaign continued to proceed favourably for our Allies, though progress was necessarily slow. Italian troops pushed their way down the Sexten Valley, and got to within striking distance of the Puster Thal railway. The movement towards Tarvis continued to develop. On the

Isonzo front Tolmino and Gorizia remained in Austrian possession, but there was no set-back in the operations for their investment. Unlike Field-Marshal Hindenburg, General Cadorna refused to throw away the lives of his men in "hacking" tactics, and preferred to proceed by the slower but much surer process of siege operations, which will ultimately give him victory with a minimum loss of life. Time is on his side, and he is nursing his resources, while the Austrian strength is daily wasting away.

As explained in the last chapter when Kovno had fallen into German hands the line of the Niemen was thereby turned. The capture of the fortress had the immediate effect of hastening the retreat of the Russian troops, who were still on the left bank of the river. A dangerous salient was created at Osowiec,¹ and it was impossible to hold it any longer. On August 22nd, under orders from the Commander-in-Chief, General Birzhozovsky, whose defence of this second-class fortress constitutes one of the most brilliant episodes of the war, blew up the fortifications, and took the garrison to Grodno. There a stand was made for some days, not with the intention of permanently holding the place, but in order to give time for the orderly retreat of the numerous detachments of Russian troops who were scattered in small bodies throughout the country between the East Prussian frontier and the Niemen river. Grodno² was eventually evacuated on September 1st, and the Russian garrison, reinforced by the detachments which had been called in from the neighbourhood, fell back slowly along the right bank of the Upper Niemen to Skidel, where a determined stand north and south of the Lida railway was made.

While the armies of Prince Leopold and Marshal Mackensen were converging on Brest Litovsk, the Germans made an attempt to capture Riga from the sea. After clearing a channel through the mine-fields, a German fleet of forty ships, chiefly light cruisers and gun-boats, entered the Gulf of Riga on August 19th, escorting a force of 5000 marines, who were embarked on large, flat-bottomed lighters, and were directed to land at Pernau,³ an undefended town on the north shore of the

¹ See map on page 188.

² Novo Georgievsk fell on August 19th, having held out for more than a fortnight after the evacuation of Warsaw. The bulk of the garrison escaped eastwards, but some 20,000 men who had been left to defend the forts while the evacuation was going on fell as prisoners of war into German hands. No booty was captured, the Russians having destroyed everything they could not carry away.

³ See map on page 219.

Gulf. These marines were intended to be the advanced guard of a larger force which was to be landed at Pernau as soon as a foothold had been secured on shore. The expedition ended in a *fiasco*. After a four-days' battle the German fleet was badly beaten by the Russian Admiral, who turned on the enemy's ships after he had drawn them into the Gulf, and compelled them to retreat to the Baltic with the loss of two cruisers and eight torpedo craft. The defeat of the fleet left the marines an easy prey to the guns defending Pernau, and they all surrendered before putting foot on shore. The expedition was ill-conceived and badly planned. Before attempting a landing it was necessary to destroy the Russian fleet and obtain command of the Gulf waters, but the German Commander put the cart before the horse, and tried to land his marines while a Russian fleet was still "in being." The expedition failed ignominiously, as all such expeditions must fail when they are planned and executed in defiance of the laws of maritime warfare.

Brest Litovsk fell on August 25th. Few details have been published about its surrender, but in the Berlin *communiqué* of the 26th it was stated that Marshal von Arz, who commanded an Army Corps in Mackensen's group, reached the fortress from the west, while the Brandenburg Reserve Corps stormed the fortifications on the north-west, and entered the fortress on the night of the 25th. The Russian Commander-in-Chief subsequently denied that there had been any assault, and stated that the fortress had been voluntarily evacuated in accordance with intention, after time had been given to withdraw the garrison, and carry off or destroy the immense quantity of stores which had been collected in the place. The Russian report appears to have been the correct one, since the enemy admittedly entered a dead city, in which they found no booty of any kind, everything having been carried away or burnt. The following is the description of what the war correspondent of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* saw when he entered the city on the 26th with the Austrian advanced guard—

"We entered the fortress and city of Brest Litovsk with the first troops—the 20th Austro-Hungarian Regiment. All the heavy guns had been removed. The nearer we approached the town, the clearer it became that the Russians had done all they said they would do, and had set fire to everything before leaving. The whole town was one sea of fire. Without exception, high, solid, two- and three-storey houses had been set

alight in the early morning. Brest was a town of 58,000 inhabitants. It does not exist any more."

It was suggested by the military critics in Berlin that when Hindenburg had secured the Niemen-Bug line he would call a halt in order to give his troops the rest they required after their sustained efforts during the summer campaign; but if this was ever his intention it was abandoned after he had failed to achieve a decisive success over the Russian armies. Those armies, though weakened by defeat, were still intact, and had to be reckoned with during the coming winter. The Germans had either gone too far, or not far enough. If they stayed where they were, with an unbroken enemy in front of them, they would be exposed to Russian attacks all along their front, and instead of resting from their labours and recuperating their strength, they would have to pass the winter in fighting which would know no end. The invasion may have been a mistake, but it was too late to go back on an error to which Hindenburg had committed his troops. The Germans were obliged to see the invasion through, and to secure their position as invaders the Russian armies must be broken up, and driven behind the Dwina and Dnieper rivers. There they would be too far off to do any harm, and meanwhile the Germans could prepare for a spring campaign.

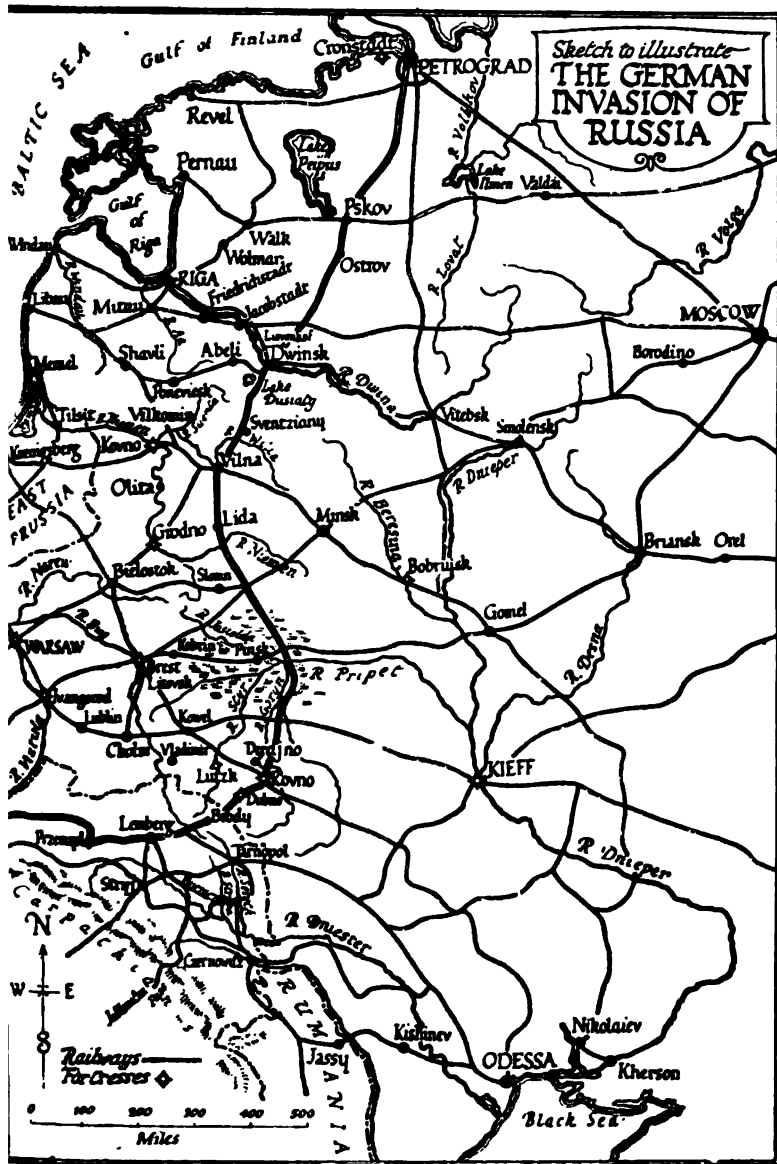
Running nearly due north and south from Dwinsk to Rovno is a double line of railway which, passing through Wilna, Lida, and Sarny, connected together the three groups of Russian armies, commanded respectively by Generals Ruszky, Evert, and Ivanoff, and which had been retiring under the co-operative direction of the late Commander-in-Chief. If the Germans remained on the Niemen-Bug line, they would leave the Russian armies in a very strong position along the trunk railway with their lateral communications secured. If, on the other hand, Hindenburg could push our Allies off this line, the effect would be to break the continuity of the Russian front, and isolate the three army groups, one from the other, for there is no other lateral line of railway communication available this side of the Dwina. Herein lies the significance of the tremendous struggle which went on at this period for possession of the Dwinsk-Rovno railway.

After the fall of Brest Litovsk the advance of the two groups of armies, which formed the centre of the German line, and which were commanded respectively by Prince Leopold of Bavaria and Marshal Mackensen, were delayed partly by

premature rains, and partly also by the difficulty in keeping such huge masses of men supplied with food and ammunition. This difficulty increased with every mile of advance, and we must remember that the enemy was invading a country which had been devastated of all supplies, and deserted by the inhabitants. Nothing could be got out of the land; everything had to come from Germany, and the railway communications, destroyed by the Russians, had only been imperfectly restored in September.

Owing to the slow progress made by Prince Leopold of Bavaria and Field-Marshal Mackensen east of Brest Litovsk and by Generals Scholtz and Gallwitz operating north and south of the Upper Niemen, Hindenburg decided early in September to turn the Russian position in the centre by an enveloping movement directed against Vilna. If he could occupy that town the effect would be to thrust a wedge between the northern and central Russian army groups, compelling General Evert, who commanded the latter group, to vacate his positions between the Niemen and Jasiolda rivers, and fall back on the Dwina. In pursuance of this plan the German commander secured his left flank by reinforcing General Bülow in Courland, and directing him to occupy the left bank of the Dwina between Friedrichstadt and Dwinsk with sufficient force to keep the Russians in check on the right bank. Having done this the Marshal concentrated a large force of cavalry at Vilkomir, and ordered the commander to make a rapid march eastwards, seize the Dwinsk-Vilna railway, and endeavour to intercept the retreat of the Russian army covering Vilna by cutting the railways leading from that town to Polotzk and Minsk. The plan was well conceived, and had it been possible to carry it out as intended, a large part of the Russian army might have been surrounded. Sventziany was occupied on September 14th, and on the 17th detachments of cavalry, escorting infantry carried in automobiles, reached the Vilna-Minsk railway at several points west of Molodetchno, which is the junction station at the point where the Lida-Polotzk and Vilna-Minsk railways cut one another.¹ Meanwhile Eichhorn moved on Vilna with three columns, advancing from the south-west, west, and north-west, while Scholtz and Gallwitz were directed to increase their efforts to reach the Vilna-Rovno railway at Lida, and south of that town, in order to deprive the Russian commander of his last line of retreat. Fortunately for our Allies, General Evert

¹ The Lida-Polotzk railway has been accidentally omitted from the map.



realised his danger on the 17th, and on that day ordered an immediate retreat of the entire Central Army group. Eichhorn's advanced guards entered Vilna on the 19th, but the Russian army escaped from the trap in which Hindenburg hoped to catch it, and secured its line of retreat.

While these important events were taking place on the northern front, General Ivanoff, who commanded the Russian armies operating south of the Pripet, won two considerable successes in the eastern corner of Galicia, defeating two German divisions on the Dolzanka river, west of Tarnopol, and an Austrian corps at Trembowla on the Sereth, making large captures of prisoners, guns, and war *matériel*. Further fighting ended in the Austrians being driven back to the Strypa, while north of Rovno, General Pulhallo's movement down the Goryn river to link up with Mackensen had been effectually checked. General Ivanoff's firm stand on the Galician frontier at this critical juncture saved the situation, for it was impossible for Mackensen, who had reached Pinsk with some difficulty on the 16th September, to march down the Pripet to Kieff until Ivanoff had been decisively defeated.

The capture of Vilna brought the struggle for the strategical railway to an end by forcing Evert to retire in order to recover his communications with Ruszky. The next line of Russian defence was clearly marked out by the Dwina and Dnieper rivers, but, as will be seen in the following chapter, the Russians turned on the invaders and stopped their further advance into the interior of Russia.

On September 5th the Emperor of Russia announced his intention of taking personal command of his armies, and two days later left Petrograd for the Front. This step may have been politically desirable, but it had the regrettable effect of superseding the Grand Duke Nicholas, who, in spite of reverses, had won the confidence and regard of the whole Russian Army. His appointment as Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief in the Caucasus meant the initiation of an active offensive on the Caucasus front, but this was concealed from public notice when the change of command took place. It was interesting to know that General Yamuskevitch accompanied the Grand Duke to Tiflis, and was replaced as Chief of the Staff on the western front by General Alexeieff; but it is hardly necessary to say that these alterations of *personnel* indicated no change in Russian policy, or weakening of the bond which bound the Allies together for the common purpose of destroying the tyranny of German militarism.

CHAPTER XVII

September 18th to October 18th

1915

Anglo-French offensive on the 25th September—Battle of Loos—French advance in Artois—German counter-attack on the 8th October—General results of this offensive—General Castelnau's victory in Champagne—Battle of Meisagowla—Russian retreat from Vilna—Slackening of the German offensive—General Ivanoff's firm stand in Eastern Galicia—General Russky secures the line of the Dwina—End of the Russian retreat—The campaign in Mesopotamia—Occupation of Kut—Bulgarians mobilise their army—The Russian ultimatum—An Austro-German army invades Serbia—Anglo-French army occupies Salonika—Tardy action of the Allies—Situation beyond their control.

ANGLO-FRENCH OFFENSIVE

THE Paris *communiqué* issued on the night of Saturday, September 25th, conveyed the first news of the beginning of the Anglo-French offensive between the La Bassée Canal and Arras, and of the French offensive in Champagne. According to a secret order issued by General Joffre on September 14th, and found by the Germans on a fallen French officer, the troops engaged in the attack comprised thirty-five divisions under General Castelnau, who had command of the Champagne operations, eighteen divisions under General Foch, who commanded the Tenth French Army, thirteen British divisions under Field-Marshal French, and fifteen cavalry divisions, of which five were British. In addition to these first line troops, twelve infantry divisions and the Belgian Army were held in reserve. Five thousand guns were to be brought into action, 2000 being heavy guns, and 8000 field pieces. Eliminating non-combatants, these formations would yield something like 1,200,000 infantry with 60,000 cavalry, and 100,000 artillerymen. When he issued his first order General Joffre evidently hoped for decisive results, for he followed it up next day with a second order telling Generals commanding divisions that his intention was to "drive the

Germans out of France, liberate those of our countrymen who have been suppressed for the last twelve months, and snatch away from the enemy the valuable possession of the occupied territory."

Operations began at 6.30 a.m. on Saturday, September 25th, the agreed plan of attack being for the 2nd British Army under Sir Douglas Haig to push its way between the La Bassée Canal and Lens, while the French advance was to be made south of Lens, the two forces forming a junction east of the town with the object of surrounding it. With this purpose in view Sir Douglas Haig deployed the 1st Corps under Lieut.-General Hubert Gough between the Canal and Vermelles, while the 4th Corps under Lieut.-General Sir Henry Rawlinson prolonged the line of attack down to Grenay. The order in which the divisions attacked is shown on the sketch. Without entering into tactical details, which are outside the province of this volume, it may be briefly stated that the attack of the first Corps had only a limited success. The 2nd Division was pulled up at the start, and its failure to secure the left flank interfered with the operations of the 9th Division fighting on its right. The 26th Brigade of the latter Division carried the Hohenzollern Redoubt, but failed to reach Haisnes for want of support. The 27th Brigade arrived at 11 a.m., but by that time the Germans had been reinforced. The 7th Division had no better luck. One of its brigades, the 22nd, broke through the German lines into the Quarries, and reached Cité St. Elic, but not being reinforced, it was compelled to withdraw. The attack of the 1st Corps failed.

The 4th Corps did better. The objective of the 1st Division was Hulluch, and that of the 15th Division Cité St. Auguste, while the 47th Division was ordered to secure the right flank of the attacking force. The latter Division carried out its mission as directed, while the 15th Division, advancing with great *élan*, pushed through Loos, the 44th Brigade going over Hill 70 to Cité St. Auguste. There it was heavily counter-attacked, and not being supported fell back behind the crest of Hill 70. The 1st Division was heavily engaged on its way to Hulluch, and reinforcements arriving too late it had to fall back west of the La Bassée-Lens road. The net result of the attack was a gain of from 4000 to 5000 yards of depth along a front of between 4 and 5 miles.

The causes of failure were two. The preliminary bombardment had been only partially effective, many of the German trenches remaining intact, with the wire entanglements uncut,



and machine-guns left in position. There were not enough guns of a heavy nature brought into action, and the bombardment was not sufficiently prolonged. The second cause of failure was due to the error committed in placing the reserve troops, the 11th Corps and Guards Division, under the Commander-in-Chief instead of handing them over to the general commanding the 2nd Army. The 11th Corps, consisting of two divisions, was four and a half miles behind the fighting line, and the Guards Division still further away. These troops did not leave their rendezvous till 9.30 a.m., and then it was too late, the battle being practically over before midday. If they had been thrown into the fighting line in the early morning they might have turned a failure into a success. General reserves are out of place in a present-day battle.

Simultaneously with this, which was the main attack, other attacks were made north of the La Bassée Canal, and east of Ypres, but beyond holding the enemy and diverting strong bodies of reserve troops towards these points, no advance was made, and no results were obtained. The attacks were not pushed home, and were only undertaken as diversions.

While the 1st British Army was attacking between La Bassée and Lens the 10th French Army, under General Foch's direction, drove the Germans out of the village of Souchez, and then advanced towards Givenchy-en-Gohelle, gaining a footing on Hill 119, while further south on the north-east of Neuville St. Vaast our Allies reached the farm of La Folie. This French army was strongly opposed on September 25th, and was unable to penetrate into the German lines south of Loos as far as the British troops did on the north of the village, but 1500 prisoners were taken, and Souchez was left well in rear.

On the night of the 25th the Crown Prince of Bavaria, who was in command of the army opposing Sir John French, brought up reserve troops from Belgium, and began a series of vigorous counter-attacks with the intention of regaining the ground he had lost. Being specially apprehensive about the British advance towards the La Bassée-Hulluch road, he concentrated large reinforcements of men and guns north and south of Haisnes, and succeeded on the afternoon of the 26th in recapturing Fosse 8, but elsewhere our troops held their ground. On October 1st, during another violent counter-attack, the Germans recovered the greater part of Fort Hohenzollern. On October 8th a general attack was made by the Germans along the whole Anglo-French line, but this attack, which was made

with four divisions, was everywhere beaten back with enormous loss to the enemy. The Paris *communiqué* of October 9th estimated the German loss in dead alone at seven to eight thousand.

"The German attack on our front on the 8th," wrote the Field-Marshal on October 11th, "was made in great strength. The main German efforts were directed against the chalk-pit north of Hill 70, and between Hulluch and the Hohenzollern Redoubt. In the chalk-pit attack the enemy assembled behind some woods which lie from 300 to 500 yards off our trenches. Between these woods and our line the attack was mown down by combined rifle, machine gun, and artillery fire, not a man getting to within forty yards of our trenches. Further to the north between Hulluch and the quarries the attack was similarly beaten off with very heavy loss, and here our troops, following up the beaten enemy, secured a German trench west of Cité St. Elie. It is certain that we inflicted a very severe reverse on the enemy."¹

After the defeat of the enemy on October 8th Sir Douglas Haig resumed the offensive, and on the 18th made a general attack along the whole of his front under cover of a cloud of gas, which was the first (reported) occasion on which this novel method of warfare was used by the Allies. West of Hulluch 1000 yards of the enemy's trenches were captured, but they could not be held in face of the enemy's artillery fire. North of Hulluch the main trench in the Hohenzollern Redoubt was retaken, the Germans only retaining possession of the two communication trenches between the Redoubt and the Quarries. As a final result of the September offensive the new British front left the old line west of Cuinchy at a point about 1200 yards south-west of Auchy, running thence in an easterly direction 400 yards south of Fosse 8, through the Hohenzollern Redoubt to the south-western corner of the quarries. Thence it turned south-east, leaving Cité St. Elie 400 yards on the west, to a point 500 yards west of Hulluch. The line then ran along the Lens-La Bassée road to the chalk-pit 1500 yards north of Hill 70, whence it turned south-west to a point 1000 yards east of Loos Church, and following the western

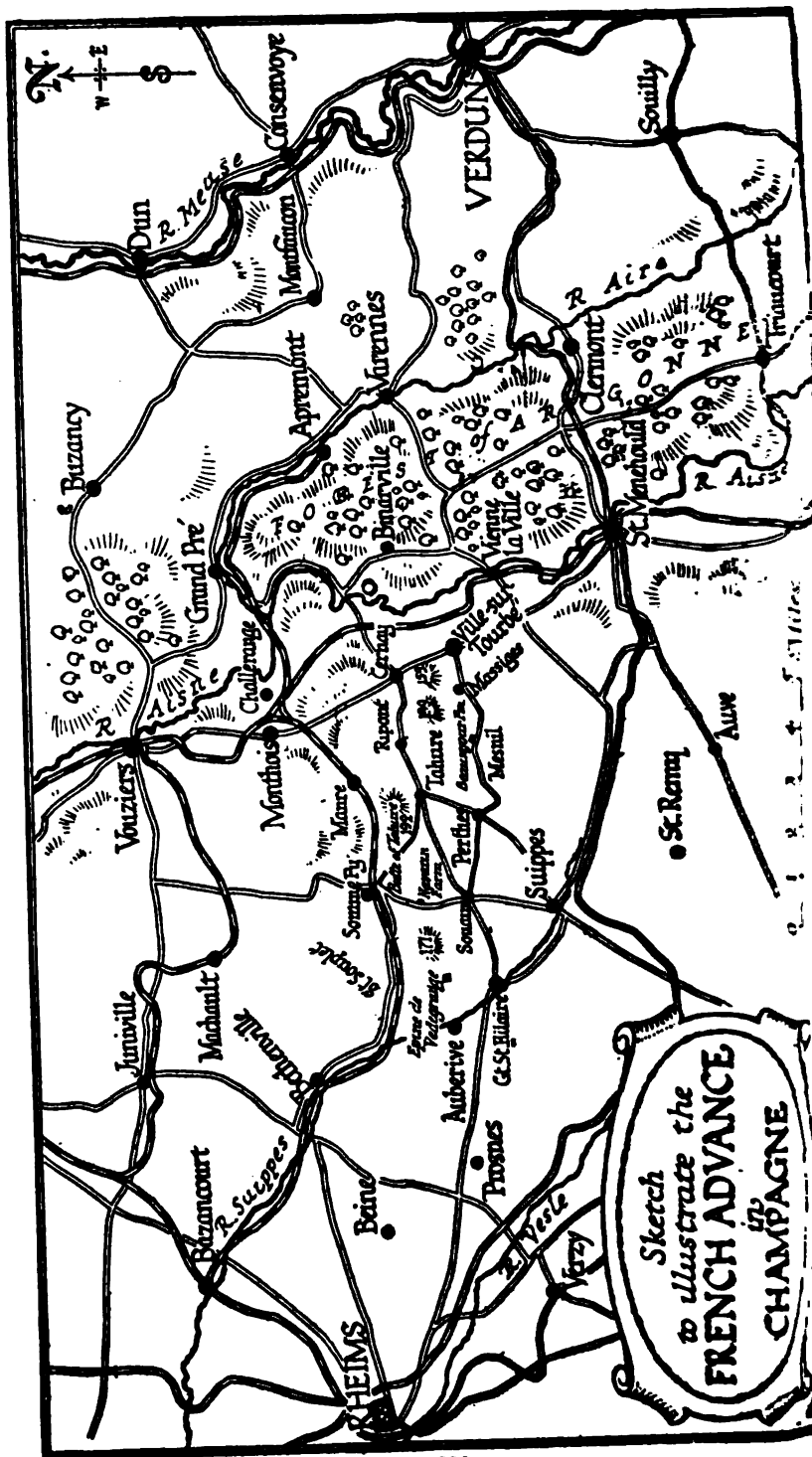
¹ The Paris *communiqué* of October 9th describes how "the assault was delivered in three successive heavy waves, followed by column formations. All were mown down by the combined fire of our infantry, machine-guns and artillery."

lopes of Hill 70 to a point 1200 yards south of the church, went from there due west to the old line at Grenay, where it linked up with the French front which ran in a south-easterly direction across Hill 119 to La Folie Farm.

The general result of the offensive which began on September 5th was to drive two salients into the German front north and south of Lens, the British salient reaching its extreme eastern limit north of Hill 70, while the French salient stopped just west of the Arras-Lens road at La Folie Farm. Lens is an important railway junction, and if it were captured would deprive the Germans of a lateral line of communication which was invaluable to them by facilitating the concentration of troops behind their front at any point threatened by the allies.

FRENCH OFFENSIVE IN CHAMPAGNE

While the events narrated above were taking place in Artois General de Castelnau gained a notable victory in Champagne. After a heavy artillery bombardment lasting over three days the French infantry were launched against the German first-line trenches extending along a fifteen-mile front from Auberive to Ville sur Tourbe, and by the impetuosity of their attack carried the whole of the enemy's entrenchments, capturing 6,000 unwounded prisoners with 200 officers and some seventy or more guns. The heaviest fighting took place along the Souain-Somme Py road, and north of Massiges, where the Breton and Vandean troops were in force. North of Souain was the division of General Marchand, of Fashoda fame. The arm of Navarin, which was the objective of this division, lies on the summit of the plateau between Souain and Somme Py, and to reach it General Marchand's men had to fight their way through two miles of German trenches and field redoubts; but they swept over the barrier with an *élan* which was irresistible, gaining the position, but losing their gallant leader, who had to leave the field wounded at the moment of victory. After this memorable battle General de Castelnau continued his offensive unceasingly, and forced his way into the German second line north of Navarin farm and Massiges. On October 5th, after another terrific bombardment, the French infantry carried by assault the village of Tahure, and reached the summit of Hill 192, which is known as the Butte de Tahure, and which the Germans regarded as invincible. Since losing this important tactical point the Germans daily tried to recover it by means of violent attacks, which have cost them many lives, but



without any result. The artillery preponderance obtained by the French was the determining factor of the situation, and promised well for further victories.

The French objective in Champagne was the Bazancourt-Challerange railway, which, like the Lens-La Bassée railway in Artois, ran behind the enemy's positions, and was the main line of supply for the German Army. The French on the Butte de Tahure were within two miles of this railway, and soon began to make it untenable with their gunfire and aeroplanes. Their object was to reach the railway and force the Germans back to the Aisne, so as to isolate the Crown Prince from General Heeringen, who was in command of the army facing Rheims. This was a strategical object worth fighting for, and they went a long way towards achieving it.

END OF THE RUSSIAN RETREAT

When the last chapter's record of the war was broken off Vilna had fallen into German hands, and the Russian Army of the centre was in full retreat. There were some apprehensions at the time about the safety of the retiring army, but General Evert, who commanded the central group of the Russian forces, had made his calculations with mathematical nicety, and after the Battle of Meichagowla,¹ which lasted for ten days, from September 2nd to the 12th, he formed a corridor of troops between the Vilja river and the Vilna-Lida railways, through which corps after corps of the Russian Army were withdrawn, not, as the Germans hoped, in a southerly direction along the right bank of the Upper Niemen, but easterly north and south of the Vilna-Minsk railway.

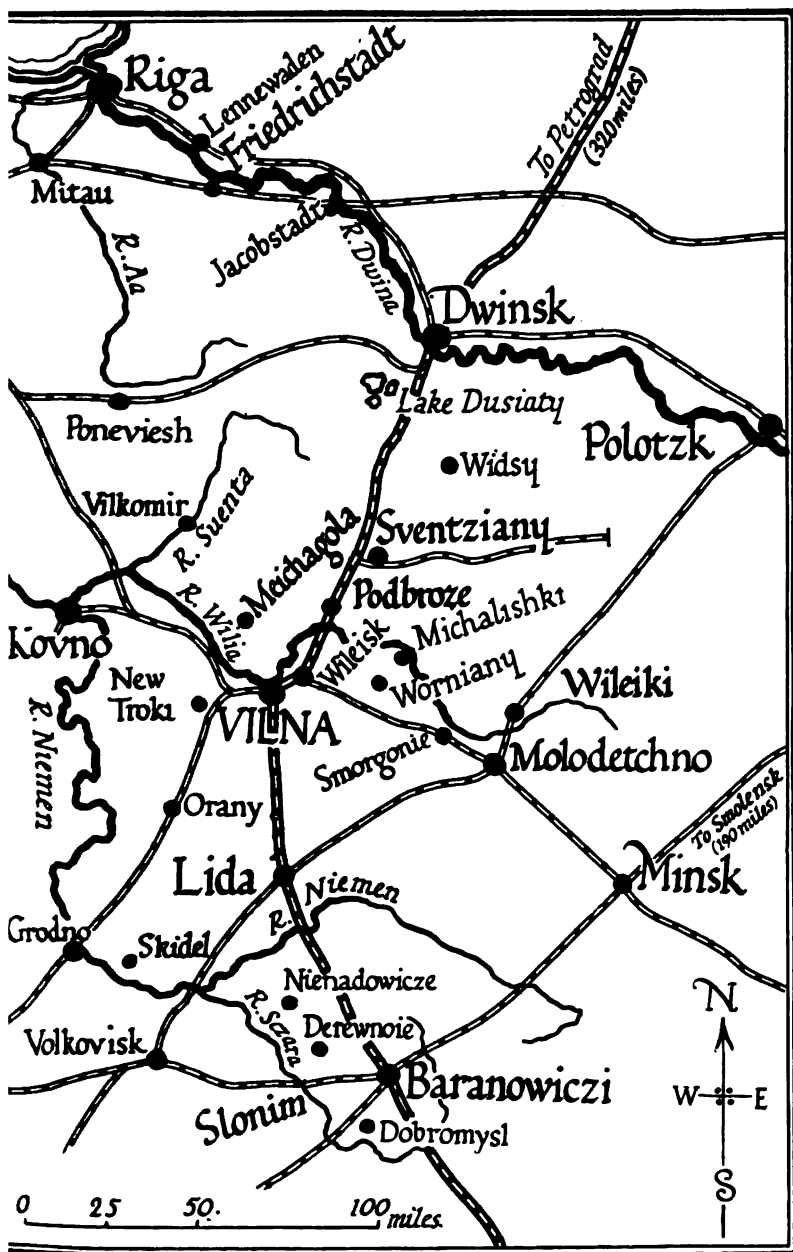
Hindenburg, who had laid his plans with all his usual care, must have been bitterly disappointed at their failure. He had launched his flank attack from Vilkomir fully a week before he let Eichhorn strike his frontal blow, and as the northern force destined to cut off General Evert's army from the Dwina was composed chiefly of cavalry, and of infantry carried in automobiles, he counted on the certainty of obtaining a decisive strategical success. At one time it looked as though this would have been the case, for while the Battle of Meichagowla was still in progress German cavalry detachments cut the Vilna-Minsk railway at Smorgon and Molodetchno, and raided the line to Polotzk. General Evert, however, who was working in close

¹ The map published in Chapter XV covers all the ground dealt with in this chapter.

with General Buskirk, and reserve troops echeloned behind the line. Minskoye-Vilnia, and as soon as he reached it, turned round Vilna he struck back at Hindenburg. Hindenburg had Hindenburg and Hindenburg, and in his turn threatened the right flank of the cavalry manoeuvring towards the Russian position. The enveloping movement ended in failure. Hindenburg went to a post in Lada, where he awaited the arrival of the Russian columns retreating from Vilna, but they were some twenty miles from where he was, and Hindenburg saw that the Russian Army was a line of rearguard troops which could not be followed along enough for General Hindenburg. The German Marshal was out-generalled, and while he waited Vilna he failed to destroy the Russian army.

Little has been published about the Battle of Meichagowia. There was one of the most desperate encounters of this sanguinary war, General Hindenburg and Hindenburg each taking command of their respective armies. According to the account of Mr. Oswald Schütte, the special correspondent of the Chicago Daily News with Hindenburg's army, the Russians had half a million of men distributed in the Vilna sector, among whom were two divisions of the Russian Imperial Guard, who were sent by General Buskirk from Petrograd to stiffen the front at Meichagowia. These two divisions bore the brunt of the fighting in the first line, and it was only when they were broken up that General Hindenburg ordered a retirement.

"The German artillery," wrote Mr. Schütte in his description of the battle, "did fearful execution upon the Russian trenches. It tore huge gaps in the barbed wire, wrecked bomb-proof shelters, and left the dead behind their earthen walls. Finally on the 12th the Germans stormed out from the hill-top shelters under a fearful fire. Down the hill-side swept their assault, while the men dropped at every foot under the terrible fire of the Russians. They paused a moment in the shelter of the gullies on both sides of the road where the Russians had planted shallow trenches, and then they dashed up the slope against the main trenches, now not 200 yards away, through double barbed wire entanglements, feeling for gas torn by their shells. The worst execution was done by the Russian machine-guns, but the Germans plunged on heedlessly, reserves coming forward to help; but already the Russians were moving back through the village of Meichagowia. The bloody angle was in German hands; more than one-half

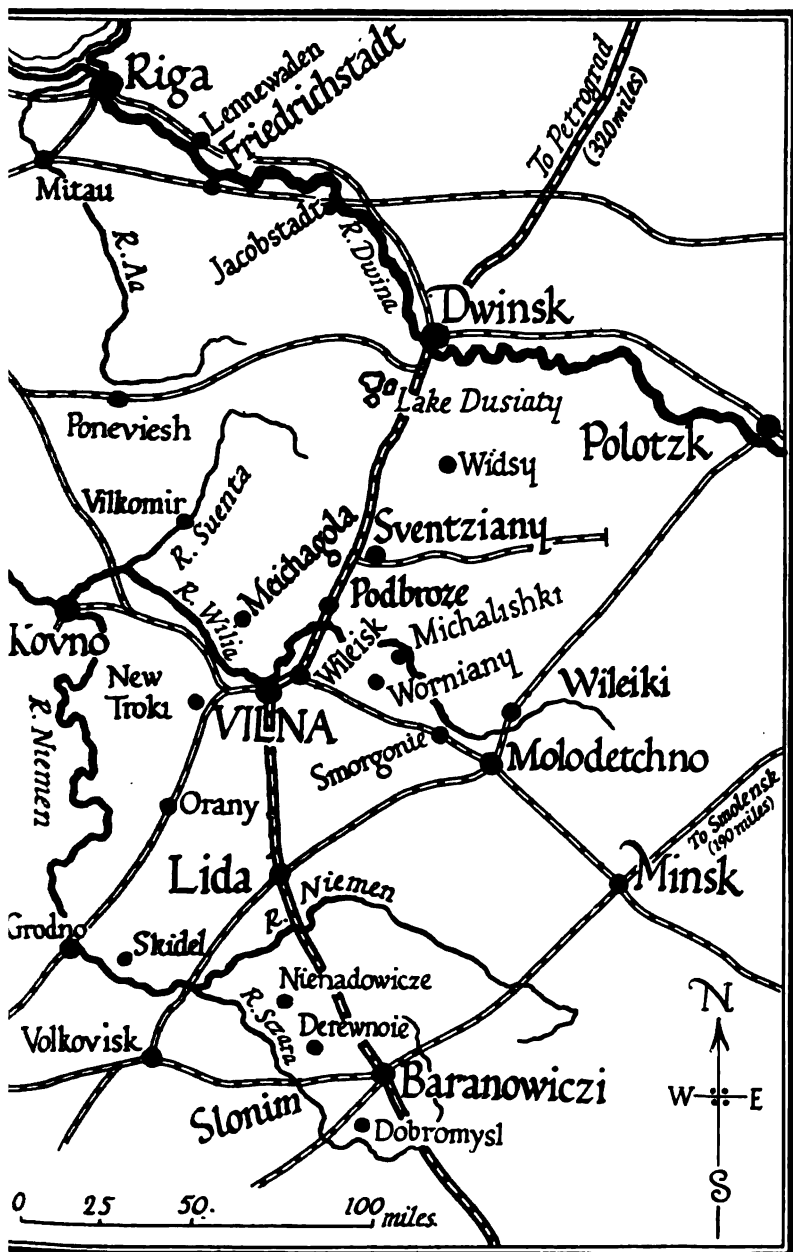


[To face page 228.]

touch with General Ruzsky, had reserve troops echeloned behind the line Molodetchno-Vileika, and as soon as he decided to retreat from Vilna he struck back at Hindenburg, recaptured both Smorgon and Molodetchno, and in his turn threatened the right flank of the cavalry manœuvring towards the Polotzk railway. The enveloping movement ended in failure. Scholtz made a dash for Lida, where he awaited the arrival of the Russian columns retiring from Vilna, but they never came nearer than fifty miles from where he was, and between him and the Russian Army was a line of rearguard troops which kept him occupied long enough for General Evert's purpose. The German Marshal was out-generalled, and while he secured Vilna he failed to destroy the Russian Army.

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[To face page 228.]

of the Russian Guards were dead, and the remnant were retreating towards Vilna. There were five more days' fighting before the Russians were driven into the city. Finally, on the morning of the 18th the German cavalry rode into the evacuated capital of Lithuania."

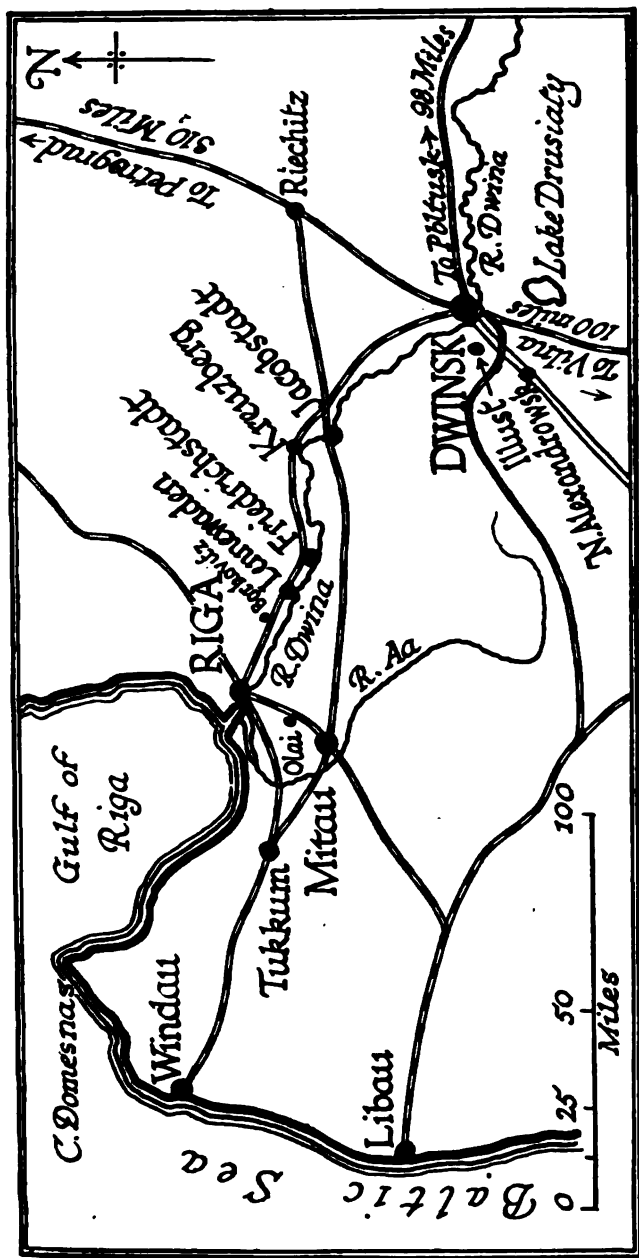
The occupation of Vilna was the high-water mark of the German invasion of Russia, and from the date of its fall the enemy's offensive began to slacken. Scholtz reached Lida on September 20th, but Eichhorn found the roads to Minsk blocked by fresh troops brought up from Polotzk and Bobruisk to relieve the Russian corps defeated at Meichagowla. Prince Leopold of Bavaria reached the railway junction of Baranovitche on the 28th, and there called a halt. Mackensen, after struggling for more than a fortnight with the Pripet Marshes, withdrew his troops behind the Oginski Canal, dug his right wing into defensive positions round Pinsk, and then handed over his command to Linsingen. If the Germans ever had the intention of marching to the Dnieper, they gave it up as soon as they discovered that the Russians had been reinforced with men and munitions and were resuming the offensive.

On the left flank of the Russian front, along a line extending for 150 miles from the Pripet down to the Dniester, General Ivanoff gave the enemy no rest, and scored several local successes against General Linsingen, who had taken over command of the Austro-German group of armies operating on his flank. After his success at Trembowla in the middle of September, Ivanoff continued his offensive towards the Strypa, and on October 11th defeated the Austrian General Bothmer in a considerable battle at Hajvorowka, driving the Austrians across the river, and taking many prisoners. He was then tactically master of the whole of that portion of Galicia which lies east of the Strypa. Meanwhile he had threatened Mackensen's retreat by sending a flying column from Rovno to attack Lutsk, which was taken by surprise on September 28rd, and temporarily occupied by the Russians. German reinforcements were at once hurried up to check this dangerous offensive movement towards Kovel, and Ivanoff's troops had to fall back on Rovno, leaving the extensive bridge-head works at Lutsk once more in the enemy's possession.

Finding he could make no progress in the centre, Hindenburg made increased efforts to capture Dwinsk, but the topographical conditions were unfavourable for the attack, the town being approached from the south and east by an intricate maze of

shallow lakelets and bogs, which precluded the manoeuvring of artillery, and enabled the Russians to keep the enemy's heavy guns out of decisive range of the fortress. General Bülow, who was charged with the direction of the operations against Dwinsk, began by launching a direct attack along the metalled road from Vilkomir, but finding the Russians strongly entrenched in the vicinity of Novo Alexandrowsk, he changed the frontal attack for an enveloping movement directed against both flanks of the Russian positions covering Dwinsk. This movement failed when, early in October, General Ruszky brought up a large force of reserve troops from Petrograd well supplied with artillery, and began to develop a powerful offensive all along the line from Vileika to the Drina, pushing back the Germans west of the Dreswiata Lake, while lower down the line he threatened their retreat from Koshiany. Then Bülow changed his tactics, and, reinforcing his left under General Lauenstein, directed an attack against the Russian positions between Jacobstadt and Lennewaden; but this attempt to get across the river met with no better success than others elsewhere. Not to be outdone, Bülow then shifted his attack further up the river, and a three-days' battle of great severity took place at Garbunowka, two miles south of Illust, and some ten miles or more north-west of Dwinsk. In the course of the battle the village of Garbunowka repeatedly changed hands, but on October 11th it was finally captured by the Russians, and remained in their possession. The defence of Dwinsk was conducted by methods which differed from those employed at Kovno, where reliance was placed on the permanent forts, which were found to be no match for the heavy siege guns brought up by the German artillerymen. At Dwinsk the defence was organised on mobile principles. The Russians pushed out their works in a semi-circle ten to twelve miles from the bridgehead at the river, the works consisting of a line of inter-communicating field redoubts extending from Illust to the north of Lake Dreswiata on the east of the Vil railway. From these redoubts the Russians kept up a continuous succession of counter-attacks directed against the enemy's batteries, and prevented the infantry taking advantage of the artillery bombardment to approach the river. By these energetic measures did General Ruszky save the situation and pin the Germans to the left bank of the Dwina.

The position in the eastern theatre of war in the middle of October 1915 may be summed up as follows: The Russian retreat had come to an end, and the Russian commanders were



[To see page 280.]

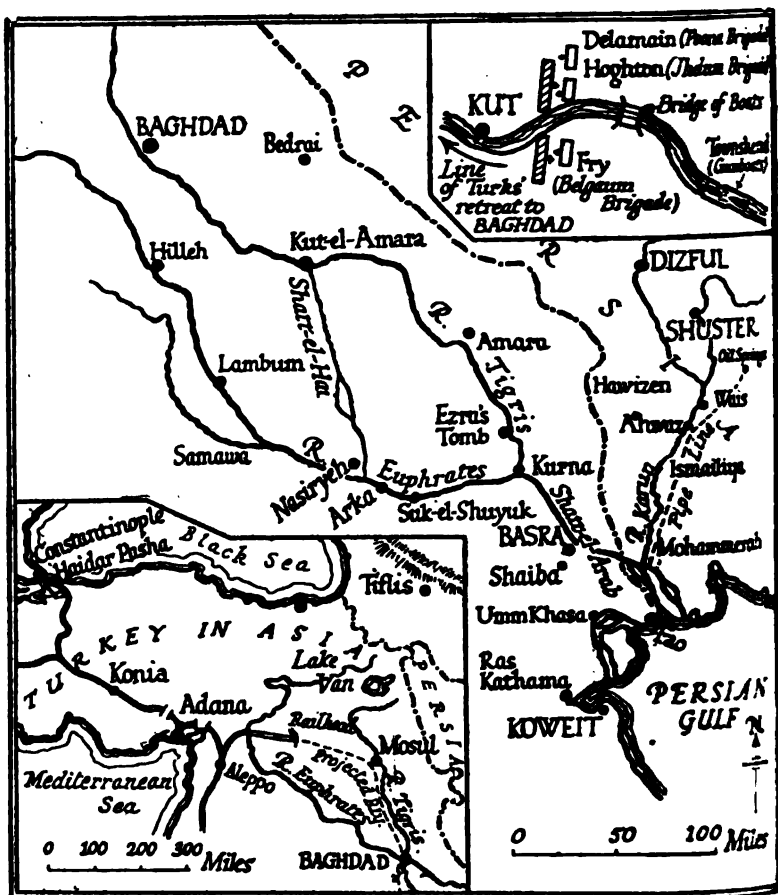
attacking along the whole 700-mile front from the Dniester to the Dniester, their offensive on the flanks being necessarily observable. In spite of their heavy losses during the summer campaign, the Russians were rapidly recovering from the effects of their reverses, and had reconstituted their troops with daily increasing supplies of men, guns, and munitions. The diversion of troops to the Serbian front as will be explained in the next chapter, visibly weakened the enemy's strength and opened up opportunities for the Russian counter-offensive to break through the lines opposed to them. Even as late as the successes of the German armies they were beginning to be a source of future weakness. The exhaustion of the front occupied was a continuous drain on Germany's military resources. Those resources are large, but they are not inexhaustible. A time must come when pressure will break down under the tremendous pressure of the sustained effort, which is being put forth to conduct different operations in three separate theatres of war.

CAMPAIGN IN MESOPOTAMIA

Owing to General Sir John Nixon's despatches not having been published in the *London Gazette* until they had appeared in the Press about the campaign in Mesopotamia, although the operations in progress were likely to have no political consequences of the highest importance.

The following is a brief record of the salient events of this most interesting campaign, which began on November 2nd, 1914, with the landing at Fao of the Fao Brigade of the 6th Division of the Indian Army, under the command of Brigadier-General W. S. Delamain. Lieut.-General Sir Arthur Barrett, commanding the 6th Division, arrived a week later with the Jhelum and Belgaum Brigades, led respectively by Brigadier-General F. A. Houghton and Major-General C. I. Fry. On November 17th an advance was made into the up the Shatt-el-Arab, where a force of some 4500 Turks with twelve guns was attacked and defeated, with a British loss of 250 killed and wounded. This victory cleared the road to Basra, which was occupied without further resistance on November 21st. It was not at first intended to go beyond Basra, the future terminus of the Baghdad railway, but as Kurma was only forty miles from Basra, and an enemy's force was known to be there, it was decided to occupy it, and this was done after some further fighting on December 9th. A detachment

of troops had meanwhile been sent to Ahwaz to secure the safety of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's pipe line, which is laid along the left bank of the Karun river to the Persian Gulf. On March 8rd Ahwaz was attacked by a Turco-Arab force of



some 12,000 men, who came across country from Amara, but General Barrett had reinforced the garrison in sufficient time to defeat and disperse the enemy with a loss of nearly 1000 killed and wounded men. Then there was a lull in the operations till Sir John Nixon arrived the first week in April, and took over command of the expedition from General Barrett, who

was invalidated to India. Meanwhile the Turks had massed a force, reported to be 20,000 strong with thirty guns, at Nasiriyeh, where the Euphrates is linked up with the Tigris by means of the Shatt-el-Hai (see sketch). This force, under German officers, moved down to Shaiba, where it was attacked on April 18th and 14th by Major-General C. J. Melliss V.C., C.B., with the 16th and 18th Brigades, and completely routed, the cavalry pursuing the enemy up as far as Suk-el-Shuyuk.

After a further rest an advance was made to Amara, which surrendered to Major-General C. V. F. Townshend, who had succeeded General Barrett in command of the 6th Division, on June 8rd. Hearing that the Turks, who had been beaten at Shaiba in April, had rallied at Nasiriyeh, Sir John Nixon detached General Gorringe with a mixed naval and military force to attack them, and secure possession of this important strategical point. The expedition was entirely successful, and in an engagement on July 25th the Turkish troops were defeated and dispersed. The whole of the Basra vilayet was then in British possession. Driven from Amara and Nasiriyeh, the Turks made another rally on the Tigris at Kut, a town of some 6000 inhabitants, where they took up a strong position, as shown in the inset sketch, on both banks of the river about seven miles below the town. On September 27th General Townshend arrived before the position, and after reconnoitring it directed General Fry with his brigade to hold the enemy on the right bank, while he sent General Delamain with his and General Hoghton's brigade across the river by a boat bridge to turn the Turkish left. General Delamain attacked at dawn on the 28th and defeated the Turks with great loss to themselves, driving them out of their positions, which they finally vacated during the night on both sides of the river; 1650 prisoners were captured, and a quantity of war material and other booty.

The operations described above reflect the highest credit on both the commander and his troops, who, at the hottest season of the year, with the thermometer often as high as 120° or more in the shade, fought their way for 250 miles through a desert country nearly destitute of food, and only scantily supplied with water. There had not been a single hitch in the operations, which were conducted throughout their course with a happy combination of prudence and dash which has led to a series of well-deserved successes. Baghdad is only 100 miles from Kut, and its occupation, when accomplished,

will add enormously to British prestige in the East, and strike a deadly blow at Germany's bid for Asiatic dominion.

BULGARIANS JOIN THE CENTRAL POWERS

On September 23rd King Ferdinand brought matters to a crisis in the Balkan Peninsula by ordering the mobilisation of the Bulgarian Army under the specious pretext of maintaining a state of armed neutrality. On the following day the Greek Government, at that time presided over by M. Venizelos, took the same step, not for the immediate purpose of war, but as a precautionary measure. The Roumanian Army was the only one among the Balkan States which was not officially mobilised, but certain preliminary steps were taken in anticipation of an order which might at any moment be issued. On September 28th Sir Edward Grey warned Bulgaria that if her neutrality was changed for intervention on the side of our enemies, we, in concert with our Allies, would give Serbia all the help she needed "without reserve and without qualification."

On October 3rd the Russian Government sent an ultimatum to Bulgaria demanding the dismissal of the German and Austrian officers who were known to be at Sofia, and requiring King Ferdinand's Government openly to disavow all connection with the enemies of the Slav cause. Bulgaria's reply being unsatisfactory, diplomatic relations between Petrograd and Sofia were broken off on October 5th. On this date two other events of importance occurred: the landing of the French and British troops at Salonika, and the resignation of M. Venizelos. A new Government was formed by M. Zaimis, chiefly composed of the leaders of the various sectional groups who were in opposition to M. Venizelos, and a few days after its formation M. Zaimis informed the representatives of the Entente Powers that its attitude towards them would be one of "benevolent neutrality." Before his resignation M. Venizelos entered a formal protest against the decision of the Allies to land troops in Greek territory, but no opposition was offered to the disembarkation, which was carried out with the assistance of the local Greek authorities, and with the sympathetic approbation of the Greek people.

INVASION OF SERBIA

It was known for some weeks past that an Austro-German army was being concentrated north of the Danube for the invasion of Serbia, and that Marshal Mackensen had been transferred from the Russian front to take executive charge

of the operations. He had two armies under his direction, one composed of Austro-German troops commanded by General Koevess, the other being a purely German force under General



Gallwitz, who was lately in command of a German army operating on the Upper Niemen. We had no official information about the strength of these two armies, and the unofficial reports were so varied in regard to numbers that no credence could be attached to any of them.

Operations began on October 7th, when Austro-German troops crossed the Danube, Save, and Drina at various places, the main crossings being effected by General Koevess at Zahrez on the Save, a few miles south-west of Belgrade (see inset sketch), and by General Gallwitz between Semendria and Ram. The Serbians reserved their resistance till the enemy's troops were across the rivers, and then attacked them with great vigour, at first pinning them to the river banks and preventing them debouching from their bridgeheads. The battle for Belgrade, which Koevess attacked from the south-west, was particularly severe, the street fighting being described by a correspondent of the *Cologne Gazette* as of unparalleled violence. On October 14th, after fighting for a week, Gallwitz stormed the fortifications of Pozarevatz, and, deploying his army on a forty-mile front, began to advance slowly up the right bank of the Morava, having reached the line Vodonj-Misljenova on the 18th, these two points being six and nine miles respectively from the Danube. Koevess, who was moving up the left bank of the Morava, after capturing Belgrade on the 14th, stormed the strong Serbian positions on Mount Avala about eight miles south of the town, and then pushed forward in a southerly direction, his right being detained for some days till he had captured the fortified town of Obrenovatz. The Serbians then fell back to a strong defensive position extending from the Mlava to the Kolubara, about twenty miles south of the Danube.

Meanwhile the Bulgarians directed two separate main attacks against the right flank and rear of the Serbian armies, one towards the Timok valley and the other from Kustendil with the object of threatening Uskub, and cutting railway communication between Nish and Salonika. General Bodadjeff, who commanded the 1st Bulgarian Army, had charge of the northern operations, his object being to link up as soon as possible with Gallwitz, advancing up the Morava. South of Nish the 2nd Bulgarian Army cut the Vardar valley railway at Vranje, and then threatened Uskub.

Meanwhile an Anglo-French Army was hurried overseas to Salonika, and began to disembark on the 5th October. The troops came too late to save the situation. Had Salonika been occupied in the early summer the whole course of events might have been altered. Uskub at any rate could have been saved for Serbia. Trusting to diplomacy instead of to force, the Allies were suddenly confronted with a situation which was beyond their power to control. Of all mistakes committed by

the Allied Powers during the first year of the war the attempt to satisfy the demands of Bulgaria at the expense of Serbia was the worst. Blackmailers are always faithless. The negotiations broke down, as they deserved to do, and the Allies have had to pay the penalty of failure due to a combination of mistakes which must be shared by diplomatists and soldiers in equal proportions.

CHAPTER XVIII

October 18th to November 18th

1915

Germany extends the belligerent area—Strategical importance of this new *démarche*—Mackensen's plan of campaign—Conquest of Old Serbia—Position in Macedonia—Congestion at Salonika—Alternative lines of communication—Routes into Serbia from the Adriatic—International Conference at Paris—Formation of a Common War Council—Common General Staff—The British General Staff—Overshadowed by Lord Kitchener—Lull on the western front—Italian activity on the Isonzo—Withdrawal of the Germans from the Riga district—Russian preparations for the campaign of 1916.

ENEMY'S INVASION OF SERBIA

DURING the month of October 1915 the centre of military gravity shifted from west and east to the south. Failing to bring about decisive results in France and Russia, the Germans launched a new attack in south-eastern Europe, with the object of breaking a way through Serbia, linking up the Austro-German armies with those of Bulgaria and Turkey, and interposing a wedge between the Russians and their western Allies. It came to this: that, besieged on two fronts, the two Central Powers, led by Germany, extended the zone of military operations by throwing out a defensive line to the south, and by this means relieved the economic pressure which the maritime blockade of their harbours had brought to bear on their resources. The extension of the belligerent area was an imperative necessity for both Germany and Austria-Hungary, who were feeling the economic "pinch of war" with increased intensity every month; but it was not all to the good, since the 1200-mile battle-front had been lengthened out by something like another 400 miles, for the defence of which the Germans became responsible. They gained, it is true, a new ally in Bulgaria, but this did not alter the fact that they added to their vulnerability, and increased the opportunities for attack by their enemies.

For the time being the campaign in the west remained in a state of suspended animation. This did not mean that it had

been abandoned, but only that progress was in accordance with pending developments in the new theatre of war, which had become for the moment the principal scene of military operations. It was some time before our Government recognised the change which had come over the course of the war, as their military advisers had formed great expectations of the Anglo-French offensive in France, the plans of which had been concentrated in August, but postponed for execution till the last week in September. On November 9th Sir Edward Grey stated in the House of Commons that the Serbian Minister at London had asked the British Government as long ago as July 7th to consider whether British troops could be sent to reinforce the Serbian Army, but at that time the military authorities thought it would be impossible to spare troops from other theatres of war. Even so late as October 9th the General Staff at Whitehall threw cold water on the proposal in a Memorandum which was submitted to the Cabinet, and must have influenced the minds of some Ministers in a sense adverse to offensive action in the Balkan Peninsula. The Memorandum has never been published, but from what Sir Edward Carson said in his letter to the Prime Minister on October 12th,¹ the gist of it was that sufficient troops could not be sent to Serbia without depleting Sir John French's reserves, and as France was the "main theatre of war" all available strength should be concentrated there, instead of being diverted to another and subsidiary sphere of operations elsewhere.

All this was true in the abstract, and the only question for the strategists to decide was where the centre of gravity of the enemy's power might happen to be for the time being. As pointed out in the preceding page, the question in this case had been decided not by politicians, but by the German General Staff, who sought by the new *démarche* in Serbia to divide the forces of the Allied Powers. That this was the view of the French Generalissimo is an open secret, for when he heard of the objections of our General Staff, as put forward in their Memorandum of October 12th, he hurried over to London, and in a few hours brought them to adopt his view of the situation as it was presented to his mind by the new German departure. What conversations took place between General Joffre and Lord Kitchener we do not know, but so strongly did he feel the urgency of sending prompt aid to the Serbian Army, that he is reported to have said that if we transferred half a million

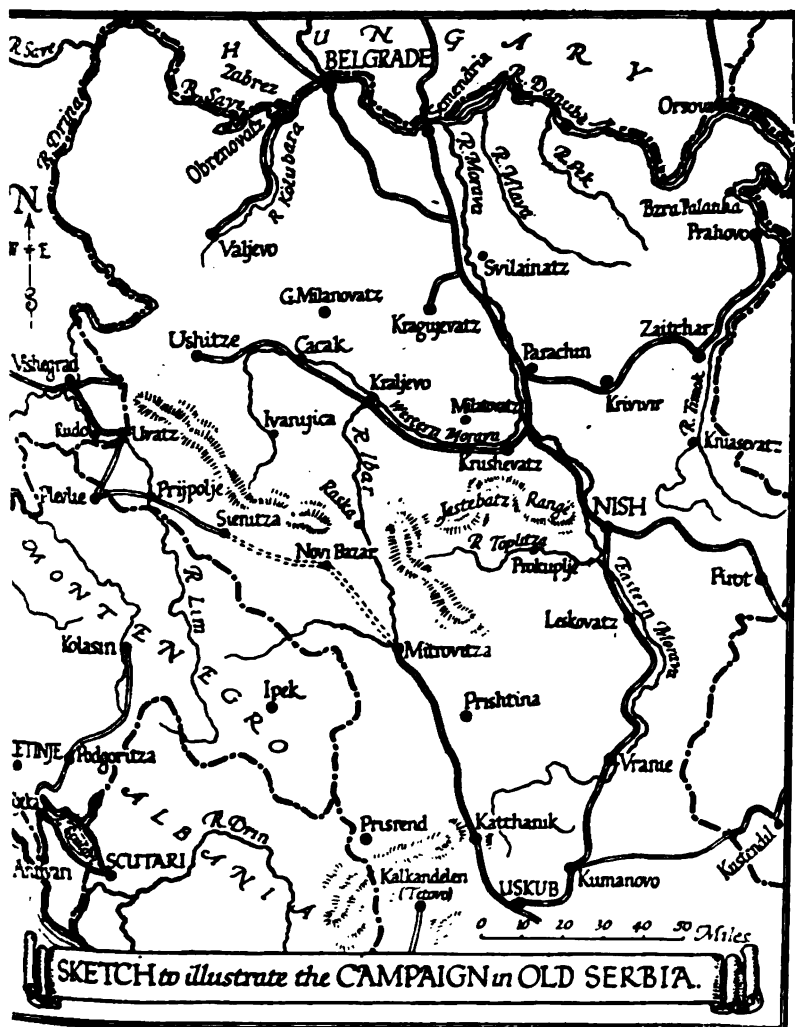
¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, Tuesday, November 2nd, 1915, Vol. LXXXV, No. 100, p. 532.

of men from France to Serbia he was prepared to defend the present Anglo-French front with French troops alone.

However this may be, what we all somewhat tardily recognised was that the new campaign, far from being one of subsidiary interest, became, by force of circumstances, strategical rather than political, a naval and military operation of the very first significance. If we allowed the Germans to subjugate Serbia, seize Constantinople, and obtain the hegemony of the Balkan Peninsula, they would succeed in doing in the south of Europe what they have failed to do in the west and east. The occupation of Constantinople by a German force would deal a tremendous, perhaps irreparable, blow to our prestige in India, and be a standing menace to our position in Egypt. The importance of forestalling the Germans in possession of this great strategical *point d'appui* was consistently argued in articles contributed to the *Fortnightly Review* ever since the attack on the Dardanelles was first launched; and in spite of Sir Ian Hamilton's want of success the reasons for undertaking the campaign were not weakened by initial failure. Recent events have changed the venue of the attack, but the objective remains the same.

The Austro-German-Bulgarian invasion of Serbia, which was described in its inceptive stage in the preceding chapter, made continuous if not very rapid progress, and by the middle of November two-thirds of Serbia were in the enemy's possession. It is clear from the movements which took place that the invasion was undertaken on a carefully-considered plan arranged between the German and Bulgarian General Staffs. An Austro-German Army composed, as is believed, of 800,000 men, with a reserve of 100,000, was to cross the Danube in two main groups, one under the Austrian General Koevess, the other under the German General Gallwitz, Field-Marshal Mackensen being in supreme command of both groups. The lower Morava valley was to be the dividing line between the two armies, which were to advance in a southerly direction, and secure the line of the western Morava. On the west an Austrian Army, which was not thought to exceed two divisions, was to assemble at Vishegrad, cross the Drina, and after detaching a force to lend a hand to Koevess's right wing, was to move into the old Sandjak of Novi Bazar and drive a wedge between Montenegro and the Serbian Army retreating south. On the east it was arranged for two Bulgarian armies to take part in the enveloping movement, the first army (200,000 strong), under General Bojadjeff, being concentrated on the northern part of the

Serbian frontier, while the second army (100,000 strong), under General Teodoroff, was assembled at Kustendil and Strumnitz. The third Bulgarian Army, commanded by General Toucheff,

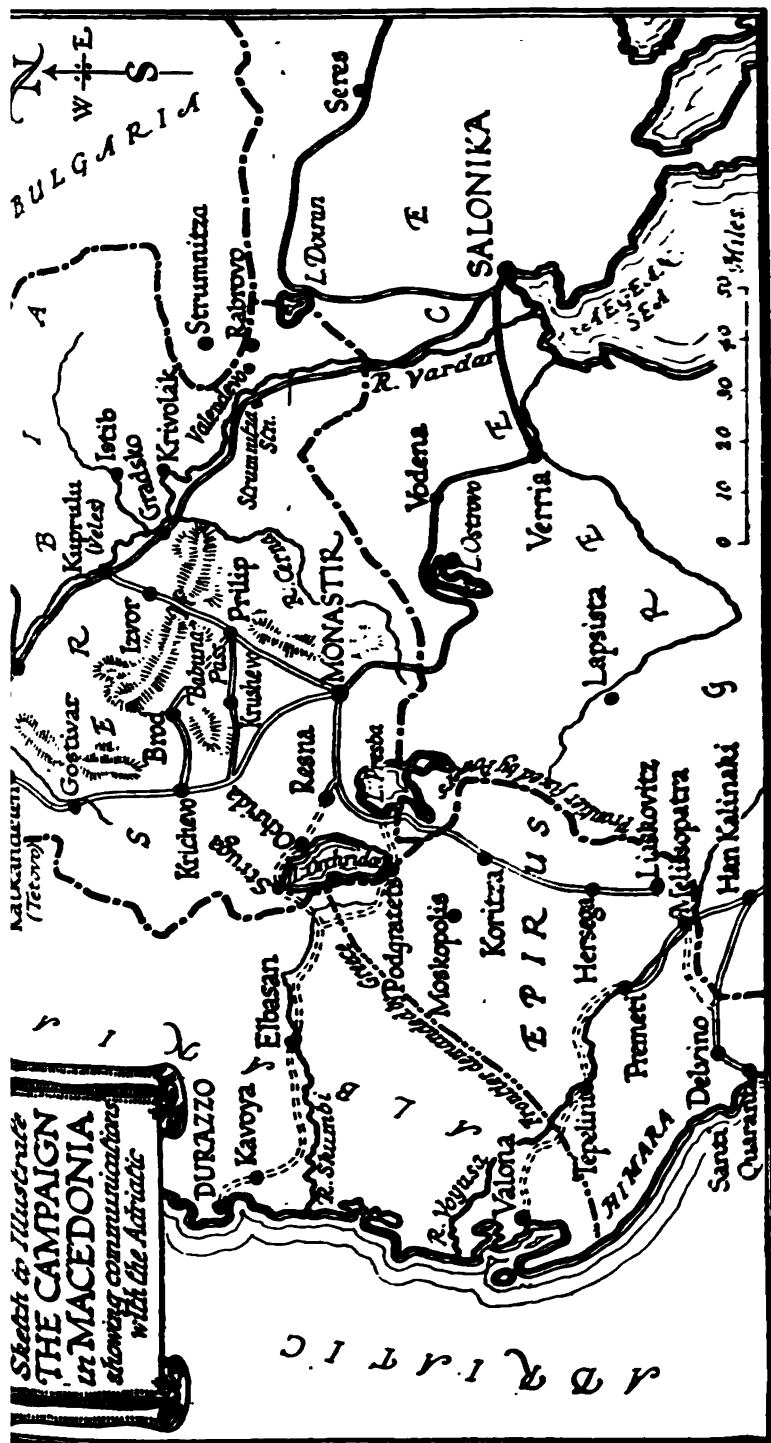


was detached to watch the Roumanian frontier. Bojadjeff's share in the plan was to march into the Timok valley, seize Nish, and drive the Serbians westwards; while Teodoroff was

to take Uskub, hem the Serbians in on the south, and prevent their retreat down the valley of the Vardar. It will thus be seen that the plan was to push back the Serbian Army into the fork between the western and southern Morava rivers, and then by a continuous enveloping movement surround it before it could escape into southern Macedonia or find a refuge in Montenegro. As the German Emperor had succeeded in securing the neutrality of Greece before the campaign was launched, and as it was known that weeks, and even months, would elapse before the Allies could disembark a sufficiently large force to take the field against Bulgaria, it was doubtless expected that, after occupying Uskub, Teodoroff would be able to capture Monastir and complete the occupation of Macedonia down to the Greek frontier. General Putnik, the Serbian Commander-in-Chief, had at most 250,000 men to oppose to the 700,000 brought against him by the invaders.

In pursuance of the above plan Koevess and Gallwitz, manœuvring in close co-operation, advanced down both banks of the Morava, pushing the Serbian Army in front of them, but never able to bring about a decisive battle. Kragujevat, the Serbian arsenal, was captured on October 31st, and on November 6th communication was established at Kriviv between Gallwitz's left and Bojadjeff's right wing, the Bulgarians having captured the frontier fortress of Zaitchar on October 27th. On November 5th Nish fell to the Bulgarians, and on the 8th Gallwitz's troops stormed the heights covering Krushevatz, and occupied that town after several days' severe fighting. Meanwhile, an Austrian force detached from Visegrad reached Ushitze, and by the end of the first week in November the whole of the western Morava was in Austro-German hands, while the first Bulgarian Army had secured the line of the eastern Morava down to Vranie. Old Serbia was thus completely subjugated.

In Macedonia the situation was not so favourable for the enemy. The Bulgarians occupied Uskub on October 24th, and from there a brigade was sent against Katchanik, where the railroad from Mitrovitza runs through a narrow defile, in order to close the road to Uskub from the north. At the same time another Bulgarian column was sent to Kalkandelen (Tetovo) to try to make its way to Monastir by the Gostivar-Kritchevo road. Veles (Kuprulu) was captured by the Bulgarians on October 20th, retaken by the Serbians two days later, and again passed into Bulgarian hands on the 29th. After establishing themselves firmly at Veles, the Bulgarians organised a force of



15,000 men to march against Monastir, but the Serbians, who had been driven out of Uskub, had fallen back on the Babuna heights, which overlook the village of Izvor, and across which the road to Prilep is taken through a narrow and easily defensible defile. Here a most sanguinary battle took place on November 4th, 5th, and 6th, resulting in the Bulgarians being defeated with great loss, and thrown back on the Vardar. The writer of this volume has traversed the road from Monastir to Prilep and Veles, and remembers looking down on Izvor from the top of the Babuna Pass, and being struck by the enormous strength of the position which the Serbians successfully defended on this occasion against a force of nearly three times their strength. An interesting account of this three-day battle was published in the *Corriere della Serra* by Signor Fraccaroli, who was an eye-witness of the fighting, and who described how the Serbians under Colonel Vassitch's command repulsed all the Bulgarian frontal attacks, and then descending from their fortified positions pursued the enemy through Izvor to Veles. The Babuna ridge, as shown in the sketch accompanying this article, runs in a south-easterly direction from Brod to the Cerna, and constitutes the main line of defence for Monastir against an enemy coming from Uskub. If the position could be turned, as it subsequently was, Monastir lay at the mercy of the invaders, for south of Prilep the country is flat and open until the hills immediately round the Macedonian capital are reached.

The Allies had not been idle during October, 120,000 French and British soldiers having been landed at that port. This was a considerable force, but not nearly enough for the purpose in hand which was to save the rump of the Serbian Army, and reconquer Serbia. Not less than half a million of men were required, and there would have to be a continuous flow of reinforcements to replace wastage. To disembark an army of this strength with its necessary equipment takes time, and as only one port was being used for the purpose, landing operations could not be expected to be complete under three months.

An advance guard of French troops crossed the Greek frontier into Macedonia on October 21st, and the first encounter between French and Bulgarian troops took place on the 28rd at Rabrovu, an important tactical point on the road from Strumnitza town to Strumnitza station, which it was necessary to occupy to safeguard the railway. The French then pushed on to Krivolak, where the Bulgarians, who held an entrenched position at Istip, unsuccessfully attacked them on the 30th. On November 2nd a further advance up the railway was made to Gradsko, at the

confluence of the Cerna and Vardar rivers. The whole of the Vardar valley from Grodsko to the Greek frontier was then in French possession. Meanwhile the 10th Division, a New Army formation, which had been transferred from the Gallipoli Peninsula, and was commanded by Lieut.-General Maion, spread itself out north of Lake Doiran, and threatened Strumnitza town, another New Army Division, the 59th, being in support.

So great was the congestion at Salonika that it was evidently desirable to open up subsidiary lines of communication from the Adriatic, and it was at one time hoped that Italy would help to do this by occupying the harbour of Santi Quaranta, and then sending a force towards Monastir to lend a hand to the Allies, operating in the Vardar valley. It is not generally known that there is an excellent metalled road from Monastir (see sketch), which crosses the Serbian frontier between Lakes Ochrida and Presba, and then, passing through Epirus, reaches the harbour of Santi Quaranta at the northern exit of the Straits of Corfu. Santi Quaranta is a small but deep water harbour, where transports of considerable size can come within 100 yards of the shore and disembark their troops in boats. The landing accommodation is at present quite inadequate, there being only one quay, and that a small one, but improved supplementary wharves could be constructed in a short time, labour and material being obtained from Corfu. From Santi Quaranta to Monastir is 140 miles by this trunk road, which passes through Delvino, Melissaopatra, Liaskovitch, Hervega, and Koritza, where *Etappen* depots could be formed for stores and munitions. The road, which the writer has frequently traversed, goes through the province of Epirus, which was so unfortunately taken from the Greeks on the initiation of Austria-Hungary and given to Albania two years ago by the London Conference presided over by Sir Edward Grey. This arbitrary transfer of territory, which was historically and racially Greek, to Albania led to an insurrection of the inhabitants in the early part of 1914, and in order to restore order when the present war broke out M. Venizelos ordered Greek troops to reoccupy the province up to the line drawn in the sketch, while the Greek Government took over the civil administration. The occupation not having been recognised as valid by the European Powers, there would be no infringement of neutrality if the Allies sent troops and supplies by this route to Monastir. From Valona, which the Italians occupied last year, a subsidiary route lies up the Voyusa river, passing through Tepelini and Premeti to

Melisopatra, where it joins the main road to Monastir from Santi Quaranta.

There is another road which starts at Durazzo, where there is a fair harbour, and follows for the most part the course of the Skumbi river up to Elbasan, and thence to Lake Ochrida. This road, passing through the centre of Albania, is often rugged and precipitous, and even mules have some difficulty when loaded in making their way along it, but a few weeks' work would make the road everywhere practicable for cavalry, infantry, and mountain artillery. Some months of road-making would be required before wheeled transport could be taken along its whole length. Elbasan is a thriving town of some 10,000 inhabitants, and contains some large public buildings and barracks built by the Turks, who took all they could out of the Albanians without giving them anything in return. There would be no difficulty in obtaining labour for military road-making, as the Albanians are poor, fond of money, and work well for good wages.

The road up the Drina from San Giovanni di Medua is the worst of all the routes into Serbia, and passing as it does through territory which is inhabited by the most fanatical Albanian tribes, would be more trouble than it would be worth as a line of communication. Medua is nothing more than an open roadstead, and has no claim to be dignified by the title of harbour, being unapproachable in bad weather. About twenty-five miles north of Medua, in the south-eastern corner of Montenegro, is the harbour of Antivari, which might be turned to good account by the Allies as a subsidiary base when it comes to a question of supplying a large army operating in Serbia. It is a deep-water harbour, capable of receiving vessels drawing from 24 ft. to 30 ft. of water, and equipped with a permanent breakwater some 200 yards long, behind which two transports at a time could lie alongside of the quay. A light railway leads from the harbour to Virpazar, at the western end of the Scutari Lake, whence steamboats conduct passengers to Rjeka, where a good road, metalled for the most part, leads through Montenegro into Serbia. The Gulf of Cattaro, in the narrow strip of Austrian territory which separates the south-western frontier of Montenegro from the sea, is one of the finest inland harbours in the world, being protected by forts and mines at its entrance into the Adriatic and by a group of powerful forts defending the approach to the town of Cattaro by the road which descends to the harbour from the Montenegrin heights. The forts, which are commanded from these heights,

could have been demolished by high-explosive shells if the Montenegrins had been supplied with heavy weapons by the Allied Powers. It has never yet been considered why the Allies made no effort at the beginning of the war to capture Cattaro harbour, for they would then have secured an important sea base available for any ulterior operations they may undertake for the reconquest of Old Serbia. There is an excellent post road from Cattaro to Cetinje, and thence through Kuman into the Lim valley.

If at some future date the Allies make up their minds to act with vigour, drive the Austro-German armies out of Serbia, and then crossing the Danube carry the war into Hungary, it will be necessary to have other lines of supply besides that leading down the Vardar valley to Saquinia. Fine facilities exist for this purpose have been already indicated above, the writer having visited the localities mentioned, and being able to differentiate between the rival merits of the various routes. The easiest and readiest route of all is that from Saraj, Guranova to Monastir, and this route should be opened up without delay.

THE PARIS CONFERENCE

During the month of November 1915 important arrangements took place in the organisation for the higher direction of the war, these consisting in the first place of the constitution of a War Council for Great Britain, and in the second place of the initiation of arrangements by which it was agreed to establish closer co-ordination among the Allied Powers as regards both the direction and execution of naval and military operations. The general purpose and scope of the proposed changes were sketched by the Prime Minister during his speech on moving the Vote of Credit in the House of Commons on November 16th.

No time was lost in carrying out the changes contemplated by the Prime Minister, who announced the constitution of the new War Council on the following day. The Council consists of the Prime Minister, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, the Minister of Munitions, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In further pursuance of the proposal for constituting a Common War Council among the Allied Powers, three members of the British War Council, accompanied by the Foreign Secretary and their naval and military advisers, went to Paris on November 17th to meet the members of the French Government, when a complete joint understanding was reached in regard to future operations in south-eastern Europe.

This new departure was taken none too soon, and it would have been better if it could have been taken earlier in the year. Throughout the war our enemies have been operating on interior lines and with unity of direction. The Austro-Hungarian General Staff is nothing more than a branch of the German *Grosses Hauptquartier*, which has taken the entire direction of operations into its own hands. Turks and Bulgarians alike take their orders from the same source, and do nothing except what they are told to do. Co-ordination is complete, and this is the secret of the enemy's success. The want of a like co-ordination had been the weak spot in our international armour throughout the first year of the war. Except between the French and ourselves, there had been no unity either of plan or of action among the Allies. Serbia's danger was never realised till King Ferdinand mobilised the Bulgarian Army and German troops crossed the Danube. Italian co-operation in the Balkans had been left out of account, and while the Germans were perfecting their arrangements the Allies had not even thought of formulating their plans. Russia sent an ultimatum to Bulgaria, but took no steps to follow it up with force. The Allied Powers had not been working at cross-purposes, for they have all had the same object in view, but they acted without that combination of thought and effort which is necessary to secure belligerent success. What was wanted was common agreement in regard to the higher direction of operations and common action in regard to their execution. The Paris Conference of the 17th November, 1915, paved the way for an arrangement which has been so developed that we now have what practically amounts to an International War Council, and a Common General Staff.

There has been a good deal of misapprehension about our Headquarter General Staff, which some have supposed to have been broken up when war was declared and distributed among the troops in France and Flanders; but this was not the case. Some of the subordinate Staff officers were given to Sir John French to form the nucleus of a General Staff for his armies, but the Chief of the Staff, General Sir Charles Douglas, remained at his post till death removed him, while his three Directorates, Operations, Staff Duties, Training, continued intact, a fourth Directorate for Home Defence being added shortly after the outbreak of war. Our Headquarter General Staff is a nearly identical replica of the German *Grosses Hauptquartier*, the only difference being that it has remained in London instead of going into the field. Seeing that we are waging war all over the world, London is the most convenient centre from which

to direct operations, and it is questionable whether the German Staff would not find it more convenient to remain at Berlin than to be constantly travelling about, first to one front and then to another. The functions of the General Staff are to plan and direct, and then leave execution to the commander entrusted with the operations. Whether the German system works well or not with our enemies, it would not work at all with us, owing to the distances over which the General Staff would have to travel in order to reach their different destinations.

Why our General Headquarter Staff had been so little *en évidence* during the war was because Lord Kitchener was Secretary of State for War, and owing to his rank of Field-Marshal naturally overshadowed the Chief of the Staff, who worked under his direct supervision more as a deputy than as the head of a department. If the Secretary of State had been a civilian the case would have been altered, as the Chief of the Staff would have had a more independent position as First Military Member of the Army Council, and chief expert adviser of the Secretary of State; but Lord Kitchener, by reason of his high rank and strong personality, was his own Chief of the Staff, and it was found difficult to disturb this arrangement by placing one of his subordinate departments in a position independent of his authority. In Germany the Chief of the General Staff is directly responsible to the Emperor, the "Supreme War Lord" of the German Army, while the War Minister, a lesser official, is responsible to the Reichstag for matters of finance and administration not connected with military organisation. This would be an impossible arrangement in England, even if it were a desirable one, owing to our system of Parliamentary Government, which rightly recognises no authority except that which is delegated by the House of Commons.

LESSONS OF LOOS

On the British Front there was a period of comparative quiescence ever since the German counter-attacks which followed the Battle of Loos failed to recover the ground lost on September 25th. Sir John French's dispatch of October 15th, which was not published in London till November 2nd, became the subject of considerable discussion both in Parliament and in the Press, the suggestion being that something went wrong with the Staff arrangements, in consequence of which the reserve troops, which the Field-Marshal had kept under his own hand, did not arrive in the fighting line in time to complete the victory. There is no doubt that much of this criticism was well founded, but there is no need to return to it, as the lessons

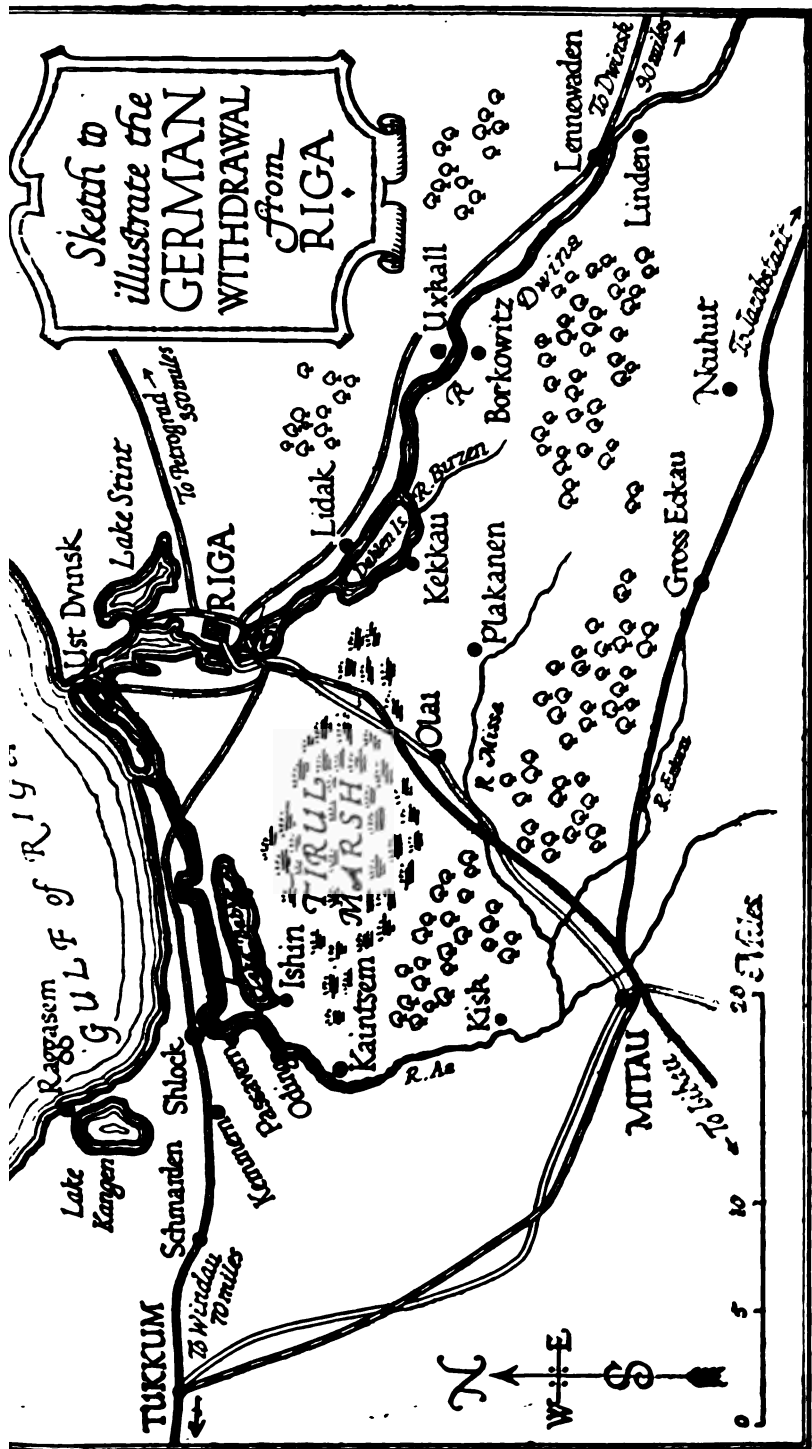
taught by the Battle of Loos have been taken to heart, and whatever may have been the shortcomings of commanders and staff officers, adequate steps have been taken to prevent any repetition of the errors committed. Final criticism must necessarily be withheld, as it is impossible to form a judgment about the battle without seeing the orders issued, and ascertaining whether they were carried out as intended by the commanders who were entrusted with the operations.

FIGHTING IN CHAMPAGNE

The French front in Champagne was the scene of some further lively encounters, which ended in a draw, both sides having won and lost positions in a nearly equal degree. On October 24th the French captured "La Courtine," a fortified salient, which had been left in their lines after the successful battle of September 25th, and which was constructed after the pattern of the "Labyrinth." This fortification was two kilometres north of Mesnil-les-Hurlus, and had been the cause of considerable inconvenience to the French till they captured it. As a set-off against this success the Germans succeeded on October 30th in retaking the summit of the hill known as the Butte de Tahure, which was situated immediately north of the town of that name. Otherwise the situation in the west remained *in statu quo*.

FIGHTING ON THE ISONZO

The Italians fought very bravely during the months of October and November, and especially on the Isonzo front, where a series of most desperate attempts were made to storm the bridgehead of Gorizia, and establish a firm footing on the Doberdo plateau. This plateau (see map facing p. 171), which acts as the citadel for the more extensive position of the Carso, rises from 850 to 650 feet above the level of the valley, and dominates all the approaches to Gorizia. Mont San Michele, which is a ridge on the north side of the plateau, and rises in one place to 900 feet above sea-level, is the key to the whole position, and round it there was some of the most sanguinary hand-to-hand fighting of the war, the Italians sometimes gaining the advantage, and at other times the Austrians. Against the position General Cadorna concentrated 1500 guns, some of which were 14- and 15-inch howitzers and naval guns. The Austrian General Boroevitz was in general charge of the Isonzo defences, while the Archduke Joseph, who held the Dukla Pass for so many weeks against the Russian attacks, had command of the corps which was holding the Doberdo plateau. Two other important



successes were placed to the credit side of the Italian account at this time: the occupation of Bezzacca in the Ledro valley, and of the Col di Lana (8085 feet) in the Dolomite district. Though the Italians outnumbered the Austro-Hungarian troops, the Austrian defences, especially on the Isonzo front, were found to be enormously strong, and could only be captured after a heavy sacrifice of life, and an unlimited expenditure of artillery ammunition.

GERMAN WITHDRAWAL FROM RIGA

The most notable event which took place on the Russian front during November was the withdrawal of the German troops from the Riga district. Up to the end of October Hindenburg had a firm hold of both banks of the Aa river from Mitau as far as Shlock, and from there to Lake Kangen, but during the first week in November General Ruzsky took the offensive, and with the help of Russian warships pushed the Germans back from Raggasem, and then from Shlock, Kemmern, and Oding. The Russians then held a line from the west of Lake Kangen through Kemmern (see sketch), whence it passed south of Oding and the Tirul Marsh to Olai halfway along the railway between Riga and Mitau. From Olai the opposing line ran along the left bank of the Dwina through Kekkau, Borkowitz, and Linden, and so on, till it reached the Dwinsk district, where the Russians were in great force. Hindenburg continued his spasmodic attempts to cross the Dwina near Dahlen island, and higher up the river at Friedrichstadt, but these met with no success, and he had to give up all hope of wintering at Riga. Elsewhere there was no material change on the Russian front since Mackensen and Gallwitz were withdrawn to Serbia. General Ivanoff continued his activities in Eastern Galicia and on the Styr, and kept General Linsingen busily employed throughout the month in repelling his local attacks, but for the moment there was no indication of any general offensive movement on the part of the Russians in the locality. Meanwhile fresh Russian Armies were being organised at Petrograd, Smolensk, and Kiev in preparation for the spring campaign. Russia's resources in men are practically inexhaustible, and her preparations to renew the campaign in 1916 was the only answer she gave to the German Emperor when he tried in the winter of 1915 to detach her from the Quadruple Alliance by offering terms for a separate peace. Never did the spirit of the Russian peoples rise so high as after the reverses of their armies in 1915, and never was their determination so fixed to continue the war down to its appointed end.

CHAPTER XIX

November 18th to December 18th

1915

Invasion of Serbia—Conquest of that country—Retreat of the French from the Cerna—General Sarrail's clever strategy—Fine stand of the 10th British Division—Occupation of Salonika—Wisdom of this step—A new sea-base—The Allies construct an entrenched camp—Humiliation of Greece—Strength of the Allies' position—Bulgaria's fatal error—The campaign in Mesopotamia—Battle of Ctesiphon—Retreat of the 6th Division—Occupation of Kut-el-Amara—Importance of Baghdad—Strategical position as between Great Britain and Turkey.

CONQUEST OF SERBIA

WHEN the preceding chapter of this volume was closed the general position in the Serbian theatre of operations was as follows. The Serbian Army had been driven south of the western Morava, and was falling back along both banks of the river Ibar before the advance of Generals Koevess and Gallwitz, while General Bojadjeff, commanding the 1st Bulgarian Army, after the occupation of Nish, had cleared the country down to the river Toplitza, and was marching in a south-westerly direction towards the Kossovo plain, with Prishtina as his immediate objective. In Macedonia General Teodoroff, commanding the 2nd Bulgarian Army, had seized Uskub, and was threatening Monastir, while the Anglo-French force, which had landed at Salonika early in October, had advanced up the Vardar valley as far as Krivolak, with the intention of lending a hand to the Serbian Army covering Monastir, and, if possible, of recovering possession of Uskub.

From the middle of November onwards the enemy's offensive became more pronounced as the Serbian resistance weakened. Continuing his advance south of the western Morava towards the Sanjak, General Koevess occupied Novi Bazar on the 21st,¹ while two days later his right wing entered Prijpolje. On that day the Serbian Government, which after the fall of Nish had gone to Mitrovitza, left that town for Prisrend, and General Koevess occupied it on the 24th, while the right wing of General

¹ See sketch of the Serbian theatre of war in Chapter XVIII.

Gallwitz's Army, forestalling the Bulgarians, who had met with a temporary set-back west of Leskovatz, occupied Prishtina on the 25th. The enemy's rapid advance decided the Serbian Government to leave Prisrend, and establish itself at Scutari, the ancient capital of Stephen Dushan, where Prince Alexander arrived with M. Passitch and the foreign Ministers on the 30th, after a rough cross-country journey through Albania. History repeats itself. With the fall of Mitrovitz and Prishtina the historic plain of Kossovo, where Sultan Amurath overwhelmed the Serbian Army under the Tsar Lazar in 1389, was again delivered into an enemy's hand, and the Serbians were once more forced to seek shelter in the mountains of Albania and Montenegro.

On November 28th German Main Headquarters published a lengthy *communiqué*, recapitulating the events of the campaign in Serbia, and stating that its object had been achieved as soon as communication with Bulgaria and the Turkish Empire had been opened up. The Serbian Army, it was stated, had fought bravely, but had lost 100,000 prisoners, and since it had been put to flight "main operations had come to an end." Though there is no definite official information to go on, it would appear that from this date Field-Marshal Mackensen left Generals Koevess and Bojadjeff to continue the pursuit of the Serbians into Albania, while he drew off General Gallwitz's Army for operations elsewhere. On November 29th the Bulgarians captured Prisrend, where they claim to have taken between 16,000 and 17,000 prisoners, fifty field guns, and a quantity of war material.¹ Koevess with his Austro-Hungarian troops meanwhile continued his advance across the Lim river, but not without encountering a tough resistance from the Montenegrin Army, which was bravely keeping the field under command of the old King Nicholas. The Montenegrin frontier was crossed on December 1st, and Plevlie, the former headquarters of the Austrian Army when in occupation of the Sanjak, was occupied on the 2nd. Farther south the Bulgarians, following up the retreating Serbians, occupied Dibra on December 4th, Djakova on the 7th, while the German troops of Koevess's Army reached Ipek on the same day. The pursuit then slackened, while the Serbian troops, dispersed and broken up into small detachments,

¹ Claims of this kind must be taken for what they were worth, as the Bulgarian General Staff followed the practice of German Main Headquarters in reckoning civil with military prisoners in their published lists. As regards war material, the Serbian Government declared that no single gun or rifle was left behind intact, all weapons that could not be carried away having been rendered unserviceable.

found their way as best they could along the mountain tracks converging on Scutari, where their leaders hoped to rally and concentrate the remnants of the army.

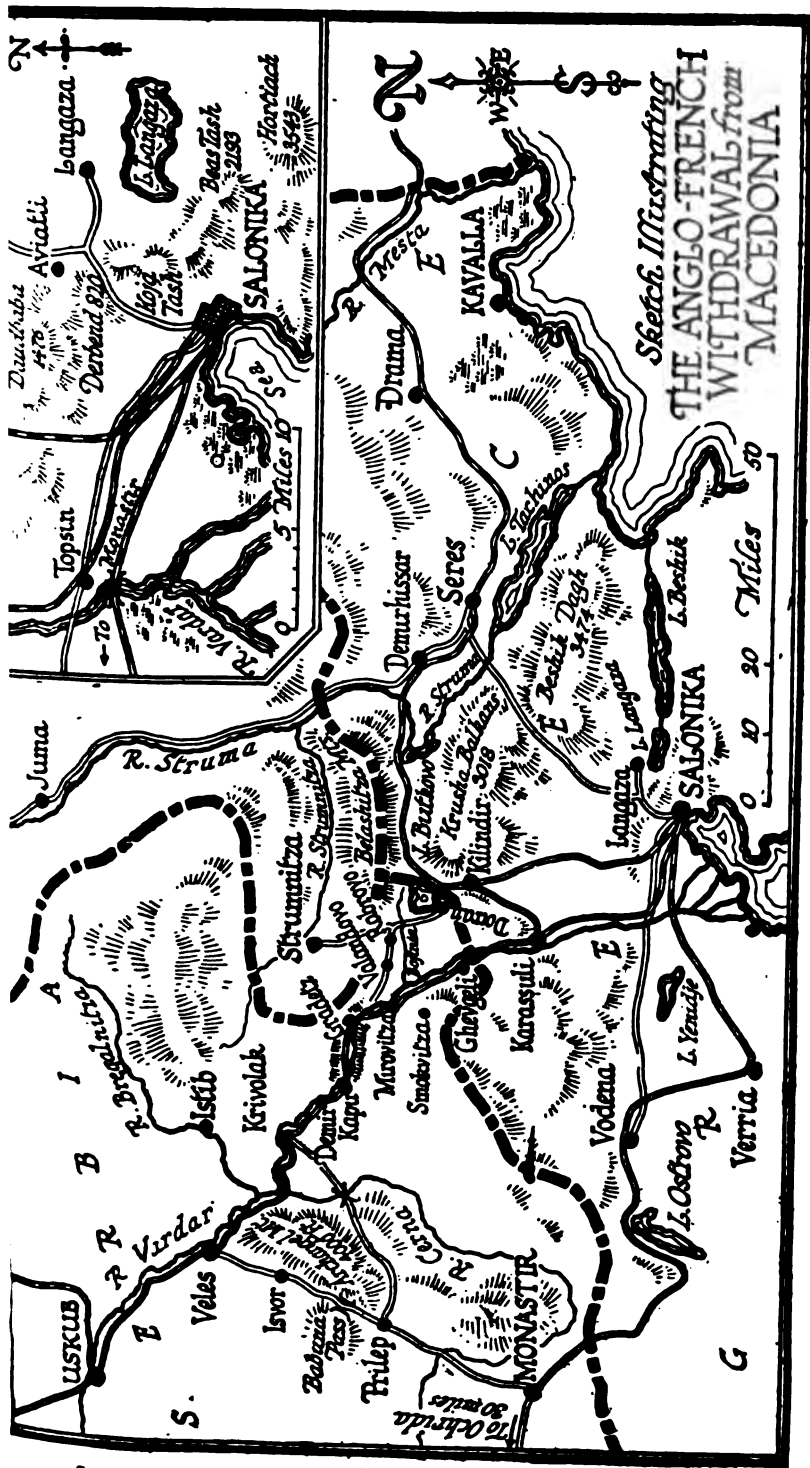
The conquest of Serbia was accomplished after a two-months' campaign, in which the Serbian army of not more than 250,000 men had to fight against odds of at least three to one. The result was a foregone conclusion as soon as it was clear that no aid could be expected from the Allied Powers. The Serbians fought with heroic courage, to which the Germans paid a well-deserved testimony, but there is a limit to what heroism can accomplish against superior force. The Serbian Army was completely broken up, and lost the bulk of its guns and equipment, but its fighting spirit remained as strong as ever, and there was every reason to hope that after recuperation and refitting it would be able to resume the offensive in the spring in conjunction with the army of the Allies, which was concentrating at Salonika. The Italian Government, which up to this time had been too busy with operations on its own frontier to co-operate with the Serbian Army on the eastern side of the Adriatic, then sent supplies to the Albanian ports for the use of the Serbian refugees, and subsequently ships to transport them to Corfu, when it was decided to make that island the temporary home of the Serbian Army. It was impossible for Italy to look on unconcernedly while the Austrians were overrunning Montenegro and pushing their way towards the Albanian coast. Victory for the Central Powers means the extension of Austria's dominion down to the Greek frontier, and this will sound the death-knell of Italy's power in the Adriatic Sea.

Throughout the month of November the situation in Macedonia was dependent on the results of the campaign in Serbia. Although General Teodoroff was firmly established at Uskub until the 1st Bulgarian Army was free to reinforce him, he was not strong enough to do more than hold up the French in the Cerna-Vardar salient, and at the same time prevent the Serbian Army of the north from breaking through into Macedonia. What he did, acting no doubt under Mackensen's instructions, was to occupy Tetovo and Kaschanik, and by so doing sever communication between Serbia and Macedonia except by a circuitous route through Albania. But he did more than this. He kept a sufficient force at Istib and Strumnitza to prevent a further advance of the Allies northwards, while he placed nearly a whole division in and about Mount Archangel, a formidable ridge some four or five miles west of the Cerna, in order to

check any attempt of the French to advance westwards with the purpose of linking up with the Serbian troops which were holding the Babuna Pass. These dispositions, which were made with a correct appreciation of the situation, were wholly successful. The French crossed the Cerna on November 5th, driving in the Bulgarian outposts before their advance, but before they got far on their way they were pulled up in front of the enemy's main position on Mount Archangel, and were unable to get nearer than within ten miles of the Babuna Pass. No reserves were immediately available, and Colonel Vassitch's small Serbian Army, being unable to wait, as it was in danger of being enveloped, fell back towards Monastir, abandoning the Babuna Pass to the enemy. Then the Bulgarians turned on the French, and counter-attacked them with great violence, but with no result to show for the loss of 4000 men. The French retained and reinforced all their positions up to November 27th, when General Sarraill, perceiving that the Bulgarians were being reinforced from the north, and that there was no further hope of saving the Serbian Army, began to prepare to retire from a position which had been left *en l'air* by the Serbian retreat, and was too exposed to hold with his limited force against the rapidly increasing forces of the enemy in front of him. A large amount of stores of food and war material had been collected in the Cerna-Vardar salient in view of a possible offensive, and these had to be got away before the withdrawal of the troops could take place. The French commander did this with great skill, deceiving the enemy up to the last moment by local attacks, which gave the appearance of an intended offensive when they were nothing more than demonstrations intended to cover the working parties who were taking away the stores.

FRENCH RETREAT FROM THE CERNA

Meanwhile the defeat of the Serbian Army of the north set free a large part of General Bojadjeff's Army, and Mackensen ordered it down to the Vardar to reinforce General Teodoroff. On December 5th a mixed detachment of Austrian, German, and Bulgarian troops entered Monastir, but by this time General Sarraill had got away the bulk of his stores and was beginning to withdraw his men. The situation was somewhat precarious and required careful handling. The French did not hold a straight front, but were dispersed over a horseshoe position extending from the Cerna on the left to Krivolak, and thence down the left bank of the Vardar till they lined up with the



British troops, who were holding a front from somewhere near Rabrovo to Lake Doiran. The problem was to bring back the French left and centre till a contiguous frontal line was formed with the British troops who occupied the right flank. Quick to appreciate the position, the Bulgarian commander, who is no mean strategist, determined to prevent General Sarrail effecting his object. Concentrating the bulk of his troops right and left of the Strumnitza-Doiran road, he sought to drive a wedge between the British and French troops, throw the former back on the Greek frontier, and intercept the French line of retreat down the Vardar valley. The plan was well conceived, but failed owing principally to the fine stand made by the 10th British Division. On December 5th the French, who had withdrawn from Krivolak two days earlier, reached the Demir-Kapu defile, and were continuing their retreat on the 6th, when after a heavy bombardment a Bulgarian attack was launched on the British position, and pushed home with great determination. Under cover of a mist small parties of the Bulgarians got into our trenches, but were immediately driven out. Undaunted by failure, the Bulgarians next day renewed the attack, and by sheer weight of superior numbers—one account describes the odds as ten to one—pushed our men out of their first position, and compelled them under cover of darkness to withdraw to a second line of trenches. On the 8th the attack was again renewed, but this time the British troops held their ground till it was necessary to retire to a third position in order to conform with the French movements. The Bulgarians claimed to have taken ten guns, but the War Office *communiqué* issued on December 12th only mentioned the loss of eight guns, which had to be placed in positions from which it was impossible to withdraw them. The British casualties were 1500. The Bulgarians are reported to have attacked after the German fashion in dense phalanx formation, and their losses must have been correspondingly heavy. One report estimates their losses in the three-days' battle to have been not less than 8000 killed and wounded. The main share of the fighting fell to the 10th (Irish) Division,¹ but we learn from a Bulgarian bulletin that some units of the 20th Division were also engaged. These troops were doubtless the reinforcements which were spoken of in the War Office *communiqué* of Decem-

¹ The 10th Division was a New Army formation, and was entirely composed of Irish troops trained at the Curragh under command of Lieut.-General Mahon, who took his division to Suvla Bay in August 1915, where it formed part of the 9th Corps under General Stopford. The battalion of the Connaught Rangers referred to in the War Office *communiqué* is the 5th (Service) Battalion. The

ber 12th as having been sent to the help of the 10th Division. Special mention was made in the same *communiqué* of the gallantry of the Munster Fusiliers, the Dublin Fusiliers, and the Connaught Rangers.

The stand made by the 10th Division in the three-days battle described above undoubtedly saved the situation, for if the British troops had given way the French retreating down the Vardar would have been taken in rear. On the morning of December 6th the French rearguard troops were still at Demir-Kapu, twenty miles from the British position, when it was assailed by the Bulgarians, and it was not till the 10th that they reached the line of the Bojania river. By guarding the right flank of the Anglo-French the 10th Division enabled our Allies to retire in perfect order, covered by their rearguard detachments. On the 11th the retirement of the French was continued up to the line Smokvitzza-Doiran without further fighting. Next day they reached Gevg'heli, and the British troops crossed the Greek frontier to Kilindir. The Allied forces then occupied the line Karassuli-Kilindir, the French and British contingents each having their own line of railway retreat to Salonika.

The withdrawal of the Anglo-French Army from Macedonia, and its retreat into the neutral territory of Greece, created a new and unprecedented situation, which must now be briefly considered. Though no definite official announcement was made on the subject, it was understood that as a result of the recent meetings in Paris of the War Councils and General Staff representatives of the Allied Powers Salonika was to be retained as a base for ulterior operations in the Balkan Peninsula. Whatever technical objections our own General Staff may have had to a policy which opened up a new theatre of operations, and diverted force from the western front, no other decision was possible in view of the declarations of the Allies to stand by the Serbians and help them to recover their lost territory. We have to face the fact that Serbia must be reconquered, and a glance at the map shows that Salonika is the best base of operations for the purpose in view. As was pointed out in the last chapter, there are ports on the Adriatic littoral which will be useful as subsidiary bases for operations from that side, but both by reason of its commanding strategical position, and

Munster Fusiliers, also mentioned, have two battalions in the 10th Division, the 5th and 6th, and so have the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, these latter four battalions all being in the 29th Infantry Brigade. The 20th Division is also a New Army formation.

because of its inimitable harbour, Salonika offers undeniable advantages, which could on no account be thrown away, as a starting-off point for the impending campaign.

Whatever may be thought of the political situation as between Greece and the Allied Powers—and the writer proposes to leave its discussion to others—there can be no question that the use of neutral territory by a belligerent Power for purposes of military convenience is a breach of neutrality, and not less so because the Government of the neutral country has, whether from sympathy or under the pressure of *force majeure*, acquiesced in the occupation of its territory. This being so, and in order to put herself right with the Central Powers, Greece could not consistently deny to one belligerent what she granted to another, and we were unable to complain when she gave her assent to the demand of Austria-Hungary and Germany that the same facilities for the movements of their troops should be granted to them as had been granted to the Allies. This was the price which Greece had to pay for a neutrality which King Constantine and his Government are determined to maintain so long as it is in their power to do so. The position is humiliating, but Greece has brought it on herself, and there is no way out of it except by entering the lists as a belligerent and making the necessary sacrifices to establish her position as an independent Power.

ENTRENCHED CAMP OF SALONIKA

Salonika, with its environs, lends itself to all the purposes of a great entrenched camp. On the south it can only be approached through a practically land-locked harbour, which is defended both by shore batteries and mines, and by the various contrivances designed by the Admiralty as a protection against submarine attack. There is deep water close up to the harbour shore, and though the permanent quay accommodation is limited it can be expanded to an almost unlimited extent by the construction of temporary wooden landing stages for the convenience of transports when unloading. On the west, at a distance of twelve miles from the town, is the river Vardar, unfordable at all times of the year, with its marshy banks extending for some distance on either side of the stream, and contributing to the difficulties of the obstacle which the river places in the way of an attack coming from the west. North of the town, and about eight miles from it, is a ridge of hills with the central peak of Daud Baba, which, rising to a height of nearly 1500 feet above sea-level, throws off a succession of spurs down to the river bed on the west, and towards the town

on the south. Daud Baba has been elevated into Acin Basin of Dardanelles fame, and can be converted into a similar citadel of the same kind, dominating as it does the railway approaches from the north, and forming the culminating point of a gigantic bridgehead, constructed so as to cover both the railway and road bridges over the Vardar. East of the Daud Baba position the hills turn south-east to the Derbent highway, through a gap in which the high road is taken to Seres. South of this gap the hills rise again, and form a continuous range encircling the town, and bending gradually westwards to the Sarranika gulf. The average height of this range is from 1500 to 2000 feet, but at places such as Beas Tash 2150 feet and Harman (3548 feet) (see sketch) the hills reach a higher elevation. From the mouth of the Vardar to where the hills touch the Gulf of Salonika on its eastern shore the perimeter of this defensive line is approximately seventy-five miles, and to allow 8000 men, including reserves, for every mile of defended ground, the garrison required to hold this perimeter would be 225,000 men. What the strength of the Allied forces at this moment may have been we do not know, but reinforcements of men and guns continued to arrive daily, and by the spring of 1916 a mobile army half a million strong was concentrated in the entrenched camp described above.

The Salonika position presents almost insuperable difficulties to an attacking force, whether coming from the west, or north, or east. On the west the topographical conditions are similar to those which baffled the Germans in their efforts to capture Riga. On the north there is the Daud Baba position, which, if fortified after the manner of the defenses on the western front, could not be stormed except at a prohibitive loss of life. On the east the town can only be approached by the twenty-mile gap between Lakes Butkovo and Tachina, a section of the river Struma running along the whole length of this gap from lake to lake, and opposing an impassable barrier to the movement of troops till the river has been bridged. West of this gap, and within decisive artillery range of the Struma, are the forward slopes of the Krusha Balkans on the north of the Seres road, and of the Beshik Dagh south of it. What with the lakes, the river, and the hills, the Struma position is a very strong one naturally, and, if fortified and defended with a sufficiently large force, would effectually close the entrance to Salonika from this direction. Between the four lakes, Doiran, Langaza, Tachinos, and Butkovo, the country is rugged, wild, and roadless, save only for the one thoroughfare from Salonika to Seres,

and it was owing to the nature of this tract of country that the coast railway was taken by a wide detour from Salonika to Doiran before turning east to Dedeagatch.

After the Anglo-French withdrawal from Salonika there was a lull in the enemy's offensive, the bulk of the Austrian troops being withdrawn to the Russian front, while most of the German troops were diverted to the west in preparation for the contemplated attack on Verdun. The Bulgarians were left to watch General Sarraïl, military and political reasons combining to prevent them carrying the war into Greek territory if they could help doing so. By this time the Bulgarian people must have realised the fatal mistake they made in allowing their rulers to throw in their lot with the Central Powers. They had conquered Serbian Macedonia, but with the determination of the Allies to carry on the war to a victorious end their conquest was only a fruitless waste of strength. The Allied Powers are collectively pledged to restore Serbia to the Serbians, and this pledge includes the restoration of the whole of the conquered territory up to the frontier fixed by the Treaty of Bucharest. What diplomatists tried to take from Serbia soldiers intend to give her back.

CAMPAIGN IN MESOPOTAMIA

Towards the end of November the Indian Expeditionary Force, which was operating in Mesopotamia under the command of Sir John Nixon, received an unexpected check when its leading column was almost within sight of Baghdad. It will be within the recollection of all who followed the successful progress of the Expedition up the Tigris that on September 27th General Townshend, who was in command of the 6th Division of the Force, reached a point about seven miles below Kut-el-Amara, where he found the Turks holding a strongly entrenched position on both banks of the river. On the 28th he attacked and defeated the enemy's troops, driving them out of a first into a second position, which they evacuated during the night, leaving 1650 prisoners and a quantity of war material in General Townshend's hands. The Turkish force was commanded by Nur-el-Din Pasha, and was estimated to consist of between seven and eight thousand regular troops with an unknown number of tribesmen. Subsequent efforts showed that the positions from which the Turks were ejected had been elaborately fortified with the evident intention of permanently holding them against a further British advance up the Tigris.

The following description of the position by a correspondent with the Expeditionary Force gives some idea of its strength—

“The Turks constructed twelve miles of defences across the river at right-angles to its general direction at this point, six miles on the right bank and six miles on the left. The works on the right bank were strengthened by the existence of an old water-cut. The banks of this, ten to twenty feet high, towered above the rest of the flat country, and afforded excellent facilities for viewing the deployment of troops advancing to the attack. A strong redoubt on the extreme right opposed a flank attack from that direction. On the left bank the line of defences was cut in two by an impassable marsh two miles broad, so that from the left bank of the river there were, first, two miles of trenches, then two miles of marsh, and then again two more miles of defences. Much labour had been expended on these defences, each section consisting of many successive lines of trenches, connected by an intricate network of deep communication trenches, along which a complete system of water supply pipes had been laid. Everything pointed to the Turkish intention to hold the position permanently.”

After the occupation of Kut-el-Amara nothing more was heard of the Expedition till November 24th, when a *communiqué* was issued by the India Office stating that on November 22nd General Townshend reached Ctesiphon, eighteen miles from Baghdad and three or four miles east of the Tigris, where he found the Turks holding a position, which he attacked, and after severe fighting captured, along with 800 prisoners and a quantity of arms and equipment, our losses being estimated at 2000 killed and wounded. It was further stated that after bivouacking on the field of battle the British force was “heavily counter-attacked” by the Turks on the night of the 23rd, while owing to want of water the troops were withdrawn to the Tigris on the 24th. A second *communiqué* was published on the 27th stating that General Townshend's troops were in possession of the battlefield, and the Turks were reported to be retiring on Dialah, ten miles above Ctesiphon, while the British wounded were being sent down the river. The number of prisoners, previously given as 800, was reported to be 1800, and the number of British wounded 2500. A third *communiqué* was issued on the 30th in which the enemy's strength at the battle of Ctesiphon was reported to have been four divisions, one of which was believed to have been completely wiped out. Owing,

however, to the approach of Turkish reinforcements General Townshend, having completed the removal of his wounded and prisoners, had withdrawn his troops to a position lower down the river. Further information was given in a fourth *communiqué*, published on December 4th, when the British casualties were reported to be 4567, and the Turkish prisoners 1600. The Turks were stated to be following up the British retreat, and on the night of November 30th General Townshend fought a rearguard action against greatly superior Turkish forces, our casualties being estimated at 150. General Townshend reported his troops to be retiring in perfect order, but he had been obliged to leave two river boats behind after destroying their engines. On December 7th the India Office reported that the British troops had reached Kut-el-Amara without further fighting, and on the 12th another *communiqué* was issued stating that after arrival at Kut-el-Amara the British position was "heavily bombarded" on December 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th, on which latter day the Turks followed up the bombardment by infantry attacks, which were repulsed with heavy loss. After that date there was a lull in the fighting, and General Townshend had time to consolidate his position on the same ground from which he ejected the Turks at the end of September. Mr. Chamberlain stated in the House of Commons on December 15th that reinforcements continued to be sent up stream as soon as they were disembarked at Fao, and he at the same time cautioned the public against attaching any credence to the grandiloquent bulletins which were issued by the Turks and which contained "grossly exaggerated" information.

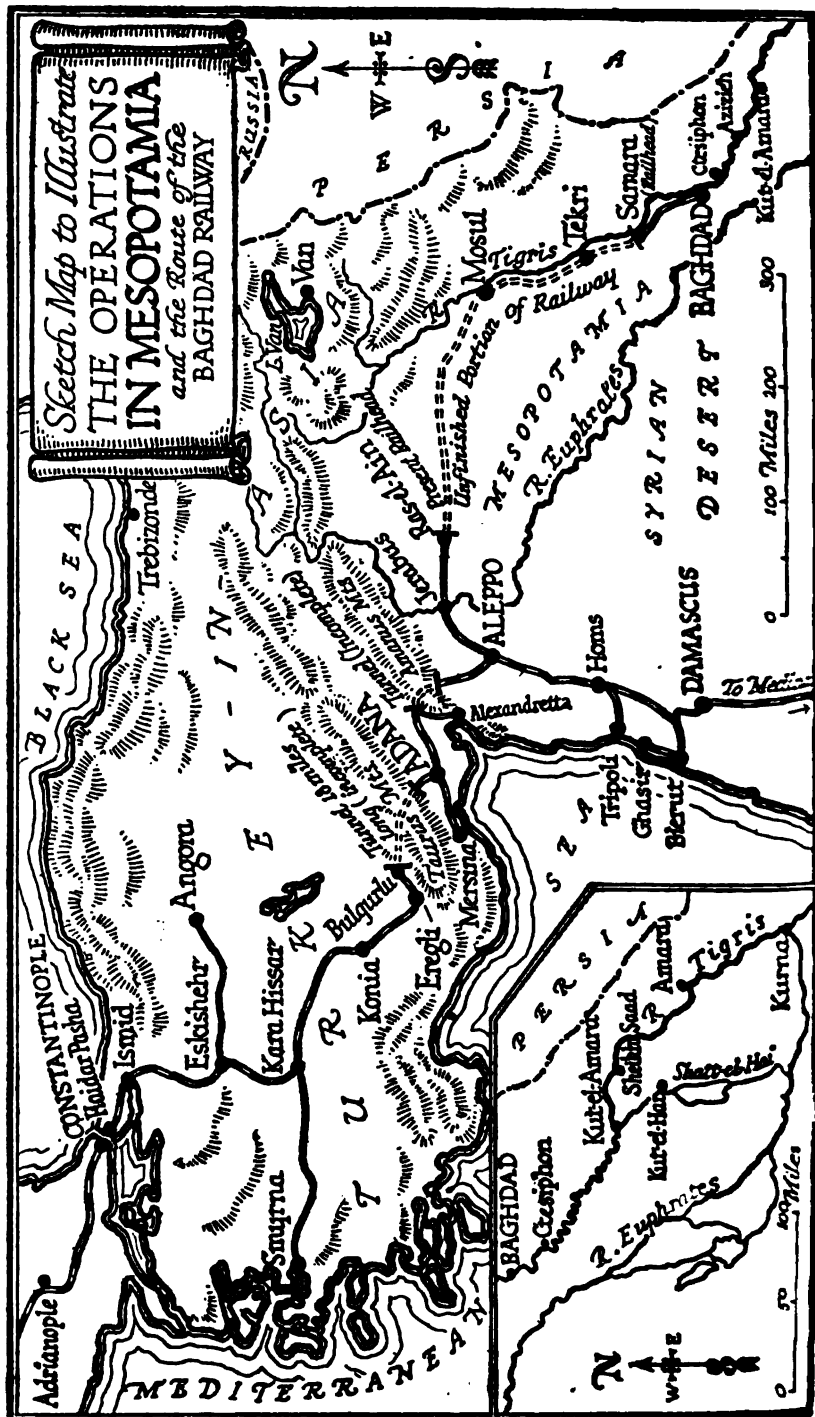
It is clear that when General Townshend reached Ctesiphon he found a much larger force opposed to him than he had anywhere previously encountered on the way up from Fao. Four Turkish Divisions were brought into line as against one British Division, which, however, had been reinforced by other troops, and was probably not less than 14,000 strong. Though the Turks were badly beaten on November 22nd, and driven off the field of battle, it appears from a Turkish *communiqué* issued on the 27th that the position captured by General Townshend was only an advanced one, and that the beaten troops retreated to the "main position," where they rallied, and after being reinforced returned to the attack on the following day. Out-numbered, and attacked by fresh troops, it can hardly be a matter of surprise if, in the circumstances, General Townshend deemed it advisable to fall back on his reinforcements rather than wait their arrival where he was. The Turks were evidently

holding Baghdad in force. He was 850 miles from his sea base on the Shatt-el-Arab, and his troops had suffered severely in the Ctesiphon fighting. Depending on water transport for feeding his troops, he had experienced great difficulty in getting up supplies owing to the river being at its lowest in September, rendering the passage of even small boats slow and precarious.¹ Retreat was clearly necessary, and it is highly creditable to all concerned that it should have been accomplished in perfect order and with insignificant loss.

"This temporary check could not be allowed to change our determination to reach Baghdad, for unless we can take and hold the city the expedition into Mesopotamia will have failed in the main object for which it was undertaken. Setting aside the prestige attaching to possession of the place, the strategic position of Baghdad on the high road into Persia, and to the head of the Gulf, is incontestable, and is of such importance as to justify the efforts we are still making to capture it. If any confirmation of this view were required it would be found in the account, which reached London in December 1915, of the insurrectionary movement which German agents, headed by Prince Reuss, succeeded in setting on foot in Persia, and which nearly ended in detaching the young Shah from his allegiance to the Allies, and persuading him to make common cause with the Pro-German insurgents. It must have been through Baghdad, for no other route was open, that the large store of arms and munitions, which were sent to Hamadan for the use of the rebel gendarmerie, reached that town. Fortunately Russian troops were available to save the situation, and by occupying Hamadan the rebel movement was scotched at its fountain head. If after restoring the Shah's authority at Kum, and elsewhere in their sphere of influence, the Russians would send a force to occupy Kermanshah and Khanikin, this would materially assist General Nixon by threatening Baghdad from the north, while the British Army attacked the city from the south."²

¹ Writing, on October 4th, on the way up the river, a correspondent with the Expeditionary Force describes the difficulties of the river traffic as follows: "Still on the boat following up. Most unsatisfactory work, as we cannot get on with it, for we are constantly sticking in the mud, and sometimes take a whole day to move off. We have frequently to disembark in order to lighten the ship. If things do not improve I am afraid we shall have to chuck it, as the feeding of the troops up here will be impossible. We are now not more than 80 miles from Baghdad by road, and 130 by river. It will be sickening to have to return, but by now the Turks must have reformed, and be considerably stronger than our small party here."

² The above words were written in January 1916, and indicate what was



THE BAGHDAD RAILWAY

The sketch map on page 266 shows the present condition of railway communication between Baghdad and the western portion of the Turkish Empire. Starting at Haidar Pasha, the western terminus of the Baghdad railway, the great trunk route through Asia Minor has been completely constructed and opened for traffic up to the foot of the Taurus Mountains, where a tunnel eighteen miles long was still under construction at the outbreak of war. When this tunnel is completed, as also the tunnel through the Amanus range of hills between Adana and Aleppo, through railway communication will have been established as far as Ras-el-Ain, the present railhead of the western section of the line. Beyond Ras-el-Ain there is an unfinished section of the railway extending for some 850 miles to Mosul, and thence down the Tigris to Samara,¹ up to which point the eastern section of the line has been completed from Baghdad. Though the work of construction has been lately accelerated, the line is still far from complete, and it is quite clear that with the Tigris in full flood we can send reinforcements from Karachi and Suez to Kut-el-Amara quicker by many days than the Turks can bring troops to Baghdad from Smyrna, Damascus, or Constantinople. We have, however, to bear in mind that through railway communication has now been established between Berlin and Constantinople, German and Austrian workshops being now available for supplying Meissner Pasha, the Engineer-in-Chief of the Baghdad railway, with the necessary plant for completing the railway to Baghdad. If Baghdad is to be taken and fortified against attack no time should be lost in pouring reinforcements of British troops into Mesopotamia, for by the end of 1916 we must expect to find the Baghdad railway completed throughout its course, when the strategical advantage at present enjoyed by Great Britain will pass out of her hands into those of the two Central Powers.

then in the mind of the Grand Duke Nicholas when he sent General Baratoff with a flying column to co-operate with General Lake. General Baratoff reached Khanikin, but only to hear of the fall of Kut-el-Amara, when several Turkish Divisions were released, and he was compelled by the pressure of superior numbers to retire into Persia.

¹ The Sofia correspondent of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* has lately reported a further extension of the Baghdad section from Samara to Tekri, while he says the Taurus tunnel will be completed in 1916.

CHAPTER XX

December 18th, 1915 to January 18th, 1916

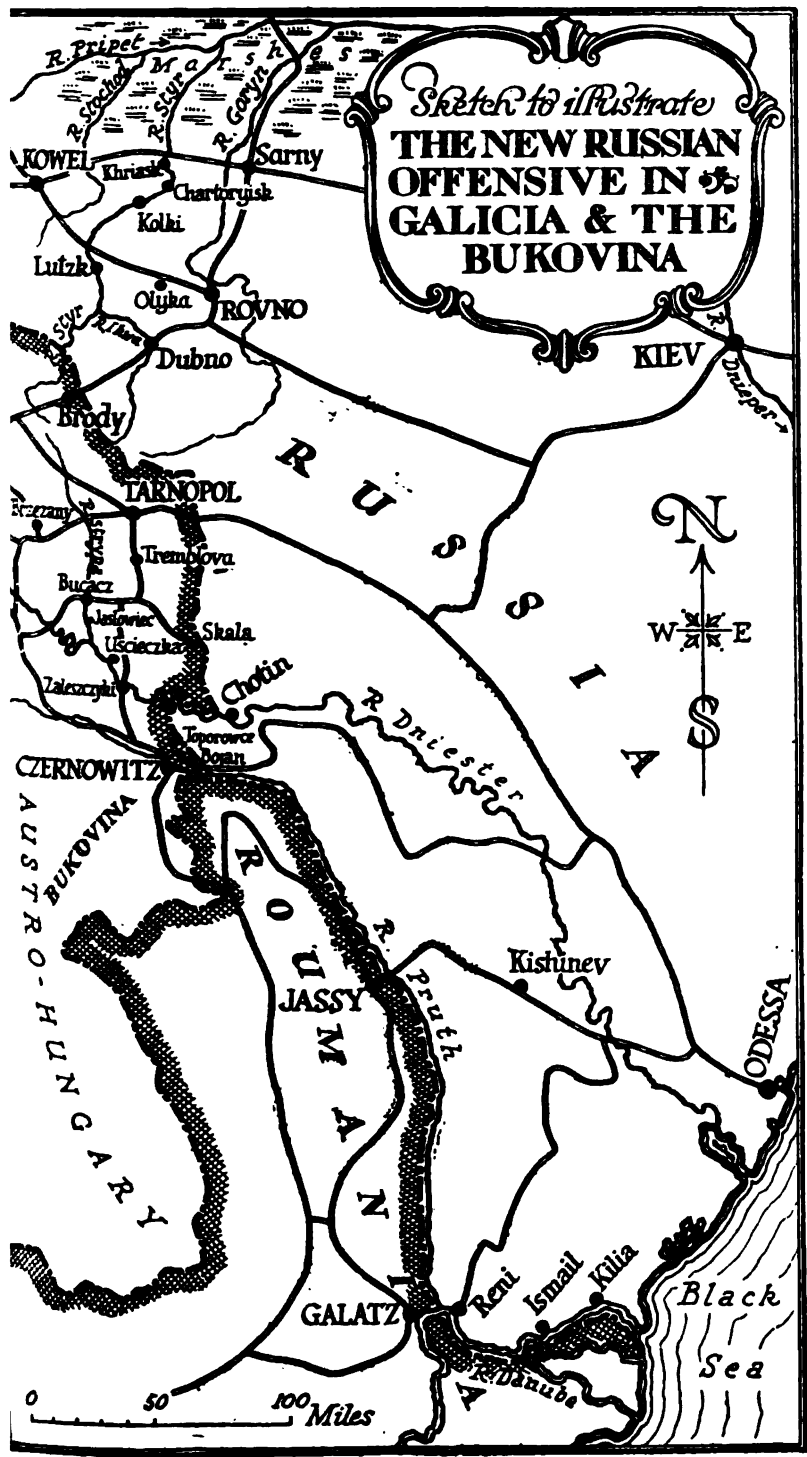
New Russian offensive—General Ivanoff's good start—Position of Roumania—Evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula—Sir Ian Hamilton's dispatch—Causes of failure—His wish to continue the struggle—Evacuation "unthinkable"—Lesson of the campaign—Position at Salonika—Serbian army sent to Corfu—Subjugation of Montenegro—A blow to the Allies—General Townshend's position at Kut—General Aylmer's relief force—Campaign in the Cameroons.

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THE new offensive movement of the Russian armies, on the 250-mile front between the Pripet Marshes and the Roumanian frontier, claims the first attention in this chapter on account of the magnitude of the operations in progress, and the results which eventually followed them. The movement had the effect of diverting large contingents of enemy's troops from the Macedonian theatre of war, and by this means gained time for the Allies to complete the construction of the entrenched camp at Salonika, and land reinforcements of men and material. As we shall find later on in this volume, the initiatory operations about to be described prepared the way for a more extensive offensive movement which had for its object the reconquest of Galicia and the expulsion of the Germans from Volhynia.

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Sketch to illustrate
**THE NEW RUSSIAN
 OFFENSIVE IN
 GALICIA & THE
 BUKOVINA**



during October and November in the Danube Delta between Reni and Kilia, and which would have been available to march through Roumania to the Bulgarian frontier had the Roumanian Government been then ready to exchange neutrality for intervention.

The enemy's armies which guarded the front between the Pripet and the Pruth were chiefly composed of Austrian troops reinforced by large German contingents detached from Mackensen's armies operating in the Serbian sector. General Panzer-Baltin, with the 6th Austrian Army, had charge of the Bukovina frontier facing Bessarabia, and of the defences of the Dniester, while General Bothmer held the line of the Strypa. North of that river were Generals Boehm-Ermolli and Puhallo, commanding respectively the 2nd and 1st Austrian Armies, which were entrenched along the Ikwa and Middle Styr, while the Archduke Ferdinand was on the extreme left, covering the railway from Sarny to Kowel. No data were available to show the numbers and distribution of these armies, nor was it known who was in chief command.

When Mackensen went to the Serbian frontier he left Linsingen at Kovel, but how far that General's command extended south of the Pripet was not known, nor was there any information to show whether Bothmer and Panzer-Baltin were acting independently, or under superior direction. Mackensen was certainly at Czernowitz for some time in December, but how long he remained there is uncertain. German Main Headquarters were silent on the subject, and unofficial reports were conflicting.

The Russian commander began to move on December 27th, when he launched a determined attack on the Austrian positions covering Czernowitz, between the Pruth and the Dniester. The battles which then began, and which raged with special fury round Toporowce, were continued with short interludes of rest throughout the month of January 1916. The Vienna *communiqués*, which were published daily, denied that the Russians achieved any success, but there can be no doubt from the Petrograd official reports that considerable gains of ground were obtained on the 1st and again on January 4th, and that the Russian troops fought their way close to Czernowitz. Losses on both sides were very heavy, and Russian progress was slow owing to the strength of the Austrian entrenchments and the determined counter-attacks made by the enemy to recover lost positions.

Simultaneously with the movement on Czernowitz a Russian

column advanced along the Sarny-Kowel railway on January 1st, and drove the Archduke Ferdinand's outposts across the Styr, seizing the village of Khriask on the west bank, and pushing out a salient into the Austrian front at this point. A few days later the Russians stormed the village of Chartyriak, and held it against repeated counter-attacks of the most violent nature. These movements threatened the railway junction of Kovel, where the enemy had laid in a large stock of food and ammunition for winter consumption. In the Strypa zone the Russian offensive met with equal success. Except at Bucacz, where the Austrians had a very strong bridge-head, the east bank of the Strypa was cleared of Austrian troops from its source to its junction with the Dniester. Uscieczka fell into Russian hands, and railway communication between Bucacz and Czernowitz was interrupted. At the same time the Russians threatened Zaleszczyki, where the Austrians had another powerful bridge-head, the capture of which would have opened the road to Czernowitz.

General Ivanoff thus made a good start, and struck some hard blows which were followed up later in the year when General Brusiloff relieved him of his command. The recuperative power of Russia was truly remarkable. Reverses only seemed to stimulate her people to fresh efforts. Kief and Odessa were full to overflowing with reserve troops which were hurried up to the front as fast as the railways could take them. Fresh guns were provided, and ammunition was plentiful. Across the frontier the Roumanians were watching the Russian movements with an interest which at one time promised to lead to intervention, but they still held back, and by so doing not only stood between Russia and Bulgaria, but protected the right flank of the Austrian army in the Bukovina, and forced the Russians to make frontal attacks in the Czernowitz frontier. Never had a nation such a chance as that which lay in front of Roumania at this time if her Government could only have made up its mind to take it.

EVACUATION OF THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA

On the 22nd December the startling, but not unexpected, news of the evacuation of Suvla Bay and Anzac Cove was communicated to the Press. The evacuation, which was carried out with no loss of life and little loss of material, came as a surprise to the Turks, who were unaware of what was going on till the operation had been concluded. The casualties were

insignificant, one officer and two men being wounded at Suvia, and four men at Anzac, while six guns, which it was inconvenient to remove, were left behind after being rendered un-serviceable. At daybreak every transport was clear of the landing-places, and only warships were left. When the Turks woke up all they could see were smouldering fires consuming abandoned stores, and warships firing on the sunken lighters which had been used as breakwaters.

The troops remained in occupation of the Sedd-el-Bahr sector of the peninsula till January 7th, and at one time it was thought that the Allies would hold on to the entrance to the Straits till the war was concluded; but the Government decided on complete evacuation, and the withdrawal from Sedd-el-Bahr was only delayed till transports were available. After repelling an attack on our lines during January 7th the embarkation of the troops began on the night of that day, and was continued with no opposition except that which came from a spasmodic artillery bombardment throughout the 8th and early morning of the 9th. By 4 a.m. on the 9th not a single French or British soldier remained on the island. During the battle on the 7th our losses were five officers and 180 men killed and wounded, but while the embarkation was in progress there was only one casualty among the British, and none among the French troops, while all the guns were got away except seventeen, which were destroyed before being abandoned. Whether the Turks were aware of what was going on is not clear from General Monro's report. They claim that they were, and that they drove the Allied troops down to their landing-places on the 8th, and compelled them to go on board their transports. The claim cannot, however, be true, or there would have been casualties to report. The embarkation was not molested, and no fighting occurred after the battle on the 7th.

Both operations described above were carried out under arrangements which reflect high credit on the naval and military commanders concerned. Retreat is always mortifying either to sailor or soldier, and all the more for this reason is praise due to those who were entrusted with a distasteful task which they performed with a success beyond expectation. To General Monro, who planned the operations, and to General Birdwood, Admiral de Robeck, and other commanders, who executed them, the thanks of the country are due for having extricated our troops from a perilous position, out of which there seemed to be no chance of escape except after heavy loss of men and stores. "This operation," said Mr. Asquith, in alluding to the

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE DARDANELLES 273

withdrawal from Sedd-el-Bahr when speaking in the House of Commons on January 10th. "taken in conjunction with the earlier retirement from Serbia and Arras, it is, I believe, without parallel in military or naval history. That it should have been carried through with no appreciable loss in view of the vast amount of personnel and material involved, is an achievement of which all concerned, commanding officers, officers, and men in both Services, may well be proud. It demonstrates that I am sure will receive, the profound gratitude of the King and the country, and will take an imperishable place in our national history."

The expedition which came to this abortive end was undertaken with inadequate force and insufficient information. Sir Ian Hamilton never had as many as 100,000 men under his command when he ought to have had half a million. This is a war, not of armies, but of nations, and we must take our share in the struggle with this understanding. Important as it was to reach Constantinople before the Central Powers could get there, it would have been better to have waited for six months before making an attempt which in the circumstances of our unreadiness was foredoomed to failure. It was known last spring that the Turks had mobilised half a million of men, and that they were led by German officers. It was also known that ever since the Agadir incident German officers had been busily occupied in perfecting the defences of the Dardanelles; yet we thought to rush these defences with a force of insignificant strength compared with the large numbers of fighting men whom the enemy could bring to bear on the defence. The expedition cost us 115,000 casualties, was useless to us on the asset side except the immortal memory of the heroic deeds of valour done in the attempt to accomplish an impossible task.

SIR IAN HAMILTON'S DESPATCH

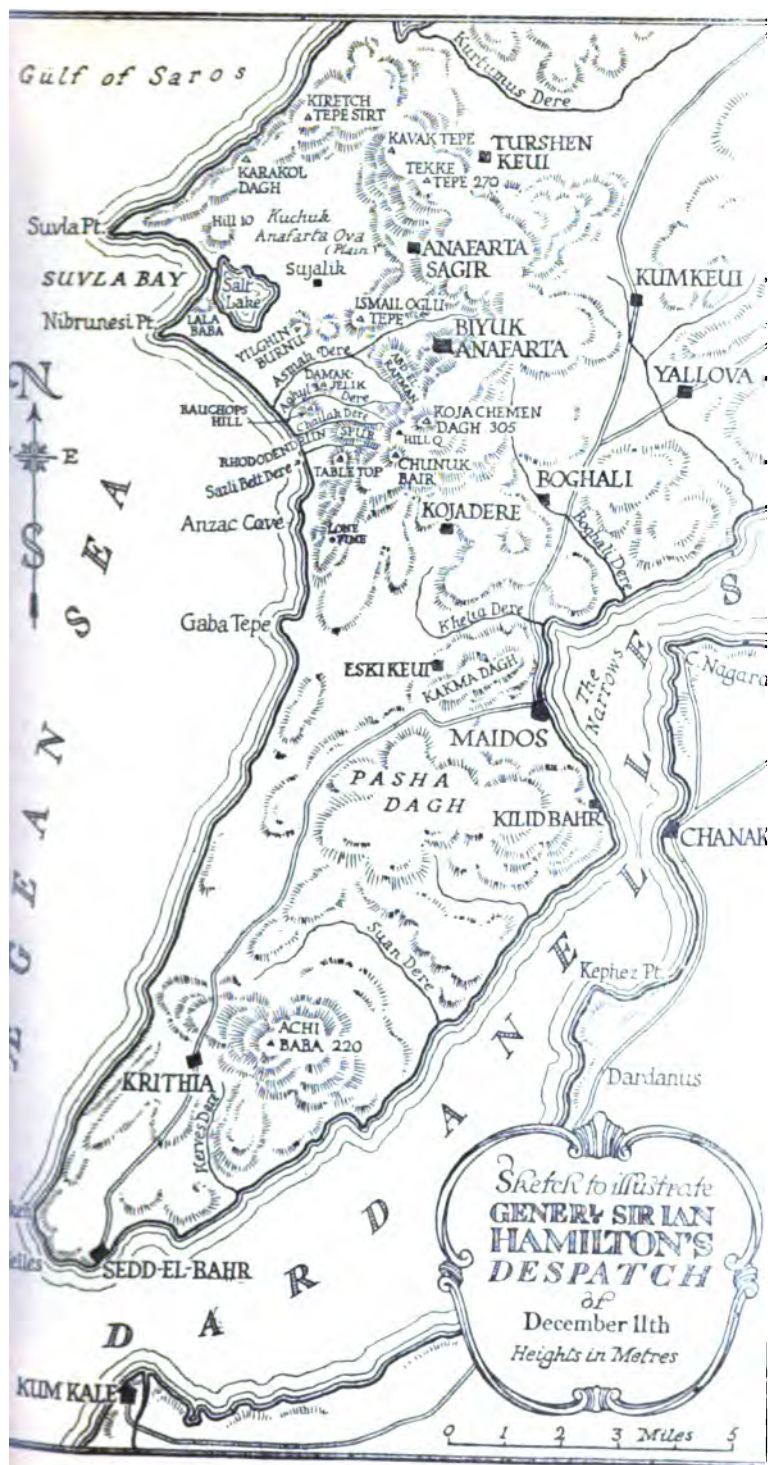
With correct appreciation of the task before him Sir Ian Hamilton knew what ought to have been done had sufficient troops been available for his purpose. In his despatch of December 11th, which will now be briefly related, he discussed the four courses open to him after the failure of his attempt to break through the Turkish positions at Krina in the three-day battle of May 6th, 7th, and 8th. On the receipt of reinforcements he could throw all his troops into the western sector of the peninsula, and fight his way through the Turkish entrenchments, or he could land a force on the Asiatic side of

the Straits and march on Chanak; or by a disembarkation at some point in the Gulf of Xeros he could seize the neck of the peninsula at Bulair; or, lastly, by a concentration of the bulk of his troops at Anzac, he could storm the heights of Sari Bair, and break the Turkish centre. The fact is, each of these operations, constituting part of a general plan of campaign, should have been simultaneously undertaken by forces sufficiently large and equipped to secure success. This is what Hindenburg or Mackensen would have done had a like task been given them to perform, and what they would not have attempted without a sufficiency of troops. In the month of May British troops were wanted elsewhere, and all that could be spared for the Dardanelles were three Regular Divisions, together with the infantry of two Territorial Divisions. With these limited numbers extended operations were out of the question, and the Commander-in-Chief consequently decided to adopt the last of the four alternatives offered, and concentrate at Anzac for a frontal attack on Sari Bair.

The plan was bold, and, considering the strength of the Turkish positions, was one of doubtful expediency, but everything that could be done by antecedent preparation to ensure its success was done by Sir Ian Hamilton, who conceived it, and by Generals Birdwood and Godley, who were charged with its execution. The story of the great battles which took place has been graphically told by the Commander-in-Chief in his eloquent despatch, and it is only necessary to recall to mind the salient episodes of the fighting before commenting on the causes which led to the indecisive results obtained.

The way to the Narrows was blocked by two great obstacles—the Sari Bair and Anafarta group of hills. These two ranges had, as was explained in Chapter XVI, a tactical interdependence which can be understood by a glance at the map. Sir Ian Hamilton's object was to seize the Sari Bair ridgeway, which reaches its highest points at Koja Chemen Dag (915 feet) and Chunuk Bair (788 feet), and at the same time secure his flanks by occupying the position known as the Lone Pine on his right, and the Anafarta heights on his left. Given possession of Sari Bair, and the road to Maidos was open. In spite of enormous difficulties, which would have seemed prohibitive to a less enterprising commander, the plan nearly succeeded.

The offensive operations, as sketched above, were timed to begin on August 6th, on which day a feint attack was made against the Turkish positions at Krithia with the intention of diverting the enemy's reserves from the Anzac area. The



feint succeeded in its purpose. Not only were some considerable local successes obtained, but by containing a large enemy's force in the southern sector General Birdwood was relieved of some of the pressure which would otherwise have been used against him. The troops engaged behaved with the gallantry which they have at all times shown in this memorable campaign. "How," wrote Sir Ian Hamilton, "can a commander say enough for troops who, aware that their task was only a subsidiary one, fought with just as much vim and resolution as if they were storming the battlements of Constantinople?" Had the 9th Corps when it landed at Suvla Bay been thrown into the struggle with the determination shown by the 125th and 129th Brigades at Krithia there would have been different results to record.

The Lone Pine plateau was captured on the night of the same day by the 1st Australian Division, and in spite of desperate counter-attacks the position was held throughout the ensuing fighting. General Godley, who had executive charge of the main attack on Sari Bair, began to move on the afternoon of the 6th, and sent forward two covering columns to clear the way for the two assaulting columns. The covering columns did their work well. By midnight the right column had cleared the Sazli Bett and Chailak ravines of the enemy, and seized Bauchop's Hill, while the left column pushed its way to Damak Jelik, where it was ready to give a hand to the 9th Corps. The two assaulting columns followed hard on the heels of the covering columns, the right column reaching the Rhododendron spur, which Sari Bair throws off to the west, and the left column getting close up to the Abd-el-Rahman spur, which juts out to the north from Kojia Chemen. During daylight on the 7th no progress could be made, but before dawn on the 8th the right column had firmly established itself on the crest of Chunuk Bair, while the left column, less fortunate in its attack, could not advance beyond the foot of the Abd-el-Rahman spur. The battle then slackened till the early morning of the 9th, when the attack was renewed, and the 6th Gurkhas, along with some platoons of the 6th South Lancashire Regiment, managed to reach the crest of the heights between Chunuk Bair and Kojia Chemen Dag, where they looked down on the Hellespont.

Victory was then in sight, and had the expected aid come from the 9th Corps the result could hardly have been doubtful. That corps, taking the Turks by surprise, had landed without opposition at Suvla Bay in the early morning of the 7th, and

made its way for some two miles inland, the 11th Division occupying Lala Baba and Hill 10, and then seizing Yilghin Burnu, while the 10th Division secured possession of the Karakol Dag. Then the 9th Corps halted to rest just when a supreme effort to advance was required. Throughout the night of the 7th and during the whole of the 8th General Stopford's troops were idle. Alarmed at the delay, Sir Ian Hamilton arrived on the scene at 5 p.m. on the 8th, and urged the Corps Commander to move, but he said his Divisional Generals were unwilling to do so. The men were tired, and the artillery had not landed. When the Commander-in-Chief landed "all seemed quiet and peaceful," and this at a time when the Anzac men were fighting with all their might for victory. Taking the direction out of the hands of the Corps Commander, Sir Ian Hamilton ordered General Hammersley, commanding the 11th Division, to send the 52nd Brigade to seize Ismail Oglu Tepe, the key to the Anafarta heights, but the brigade did not move till 4 a.m. on the 9th, and it was then too late, Turkish reserves having come up and secured the position. The advantage gained by the initial surprise was lost. For all the use the 9th Corps was to General Birdwood it might just as well have never been landed.

The Corps Commander has asked for an inquiry, but the facts speak for themselves. Bold and daring leadership was necessary for success, and it was not forthcoming. It is impossible to read Sir Ian Hamilton's despatch without feeling that his outspoken indictment of his subordinate's conduct of the battle was well deserved. "Driving power was required, and even a certain ruthlessness, to brush aside pleas for a respite for tired troops. The one fatal error was inertia, and inertia prevailed."

Baffled, but not disheartened, Sir Ian Hamilton wished to continue the struggle, and asked for a reinforcement of 50,000 rifles. His request was refused, and he remained marking time till on October 11th he was directed to submit an estimate of the probable loss that would be incurred in evacuating the peninsula. His reply was that evacuation was unthinkable, and he was then recalled. What followed is within recent memory. General Monro was sent out to report on the situation, and he recommended evacuation, but the Government refused to act on the recommendation till it had been confirmed by Lord Kitchener after visiting the peninsula.

The lesson which the Dardanelles campaign has to teach is twofold: not to despise our enemies, and when we strike to do

CHAPTER XX

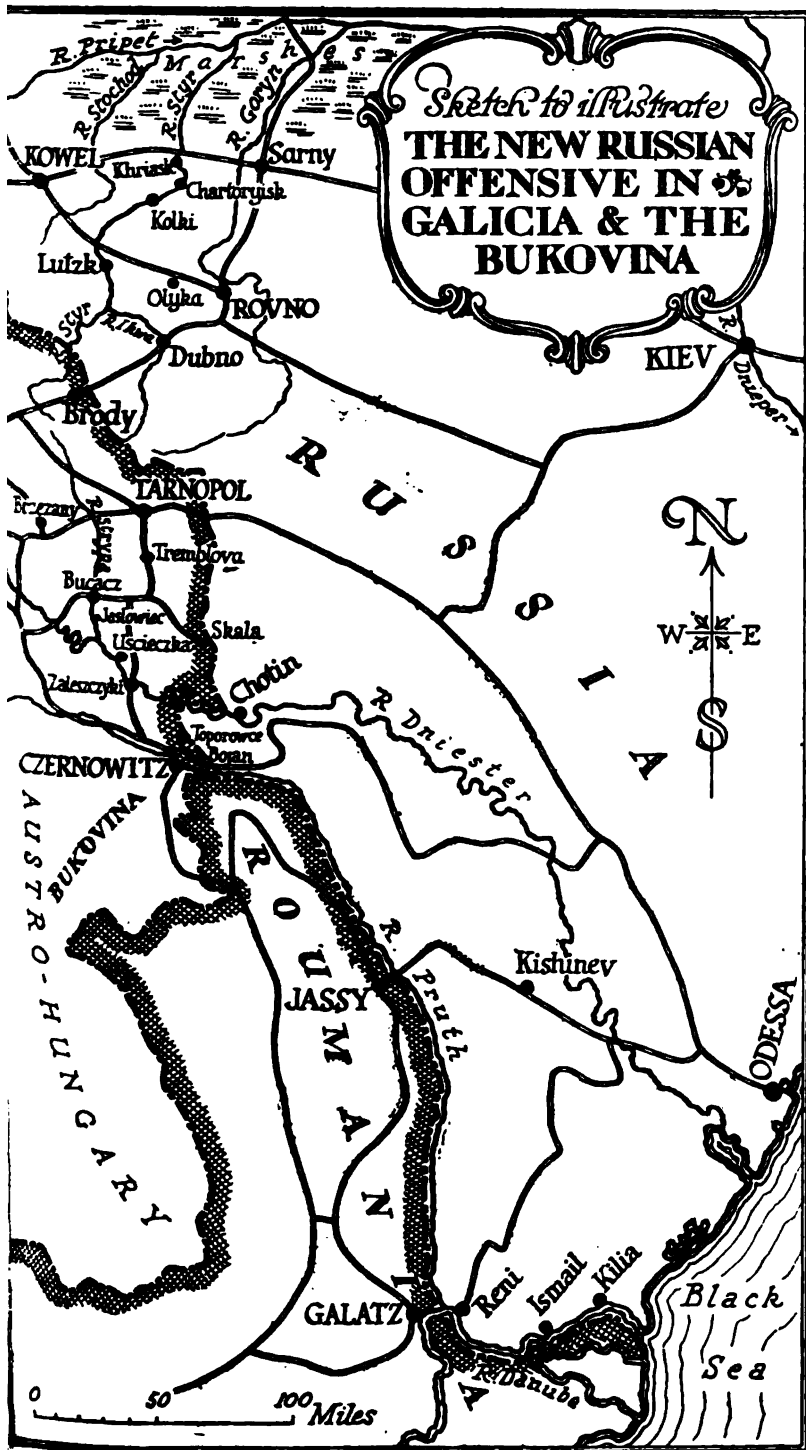
December 18th, 1915 to January 18th, 1916

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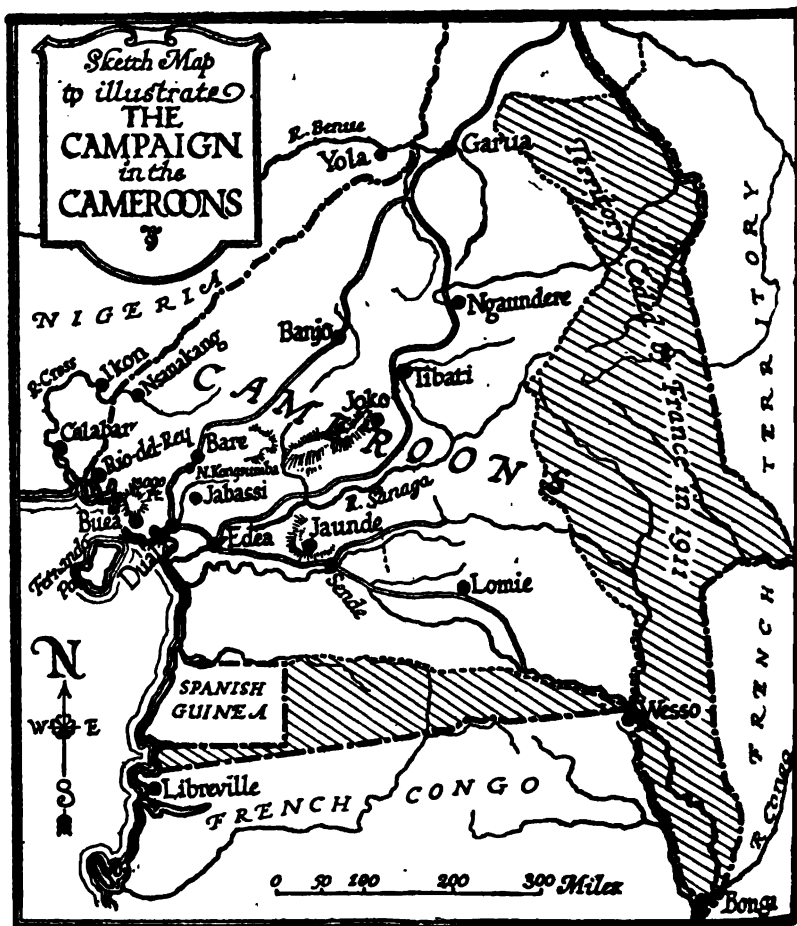
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EVACUATION OF THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA

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it fell back on Ikon, while a third force which had come from Calabar was held up in front of Rio del Rey.

Meanwhile Major-General C. M. Dobell, C.M.G., D.S.O., Inspector-General of the West African Frontier Force, organised



an Anglo-French army of 10,000 men at Lagos, and on September 22nd appeared off Duala, his transports being convoyed by H.M.S. *Cumberland* and *Dwarf*. After a short bombardment by the ships the town surrendered, and the advanced guards of General Dobell's force were landed on the 26th. As soon as

the disembarkation was complete the force was divided into two parts, the French contingent going eastward to Edea, which was captured on October 6th, while the British troops advanced up the railway to Bare, and also westwards to Buca. Jabassi was occupied on October 14th, Buca on November 15, and Bare about December 10th, the German forces falling back into the Hinterland towards Joko.

While these operations were in progress in the south and west Brigadier-General F. H. G. Cunliffe, Commandant of the Nigeria Regiment, was organising an Anglo-French force at Yola with the intention of making a second attempt to capture Garua. He appears to have started on his way towards the end of November, but owing to having to wait for the arrival of some heavy French guns his progress was delayed till the late spring of 1915, when he surrounded and laid siege to Garua, which surrendered on June 11th. Following up his success, General Cunliffe then moved farther south and occupied Ngaundere on June 29th. Then the operations came to a temporary end on account of the rainy season, and they were not resumed till October 1915, when a well-planned co-operative movement was started with the object of enveloping the German forces which were concentrated in the Hinterland at Joko and Jaunde, where the Government was established. General Cunliffe, continuing his southerly march, reached Banjo on October 24th, while the French Colonel Brisset, starting from Ngaundere, entered Tibuti on November 11th, the two commanders pushing the Germans before them, and threatening Joko. On the west the British contingent of General Dobell's force advanced along the railway from Edea and reached the Puge river, while farther south the French contingent occupied Makondo. Meanwhile a French column, reinforced by a Belgian contingent from the Congo, crossed the Ssanga river at Wemmo, and after a march of 500 miles reached the railhead of the Edea line at Sende, forty-five miles from Jaunde, on the same day that General Cunliffe occupied Banjo. During all these advances constant fighting took place, and heavy losses were inflicted on the Germans, causing them to be broken up into small parties of fugitives, who found their last refuge in the Hinterland stronghold of Joko, and south of the Ssanga river in the comparatively elevated area round Jaunde, where the German Government was established after the British occupation of Edea. On January 1st, 1916, a British column under Colonel E. H. Gorges, C.B., Commandant of the West African Regiment, reached Jaunde, and occupied the town, the German

officials escaping in a southerly direction. General Cunliffe and Colonel Brisset meanwhile undertook a converging movement on Joko, which is the last stronghold in German possession. As the coast was blockaded, and the Allies held all the river, railway, and road routes, what remained of the German forces had either to surrender, or escape if they could, into neutral territory.

CHAPTER XXI

January 18th to February 18th

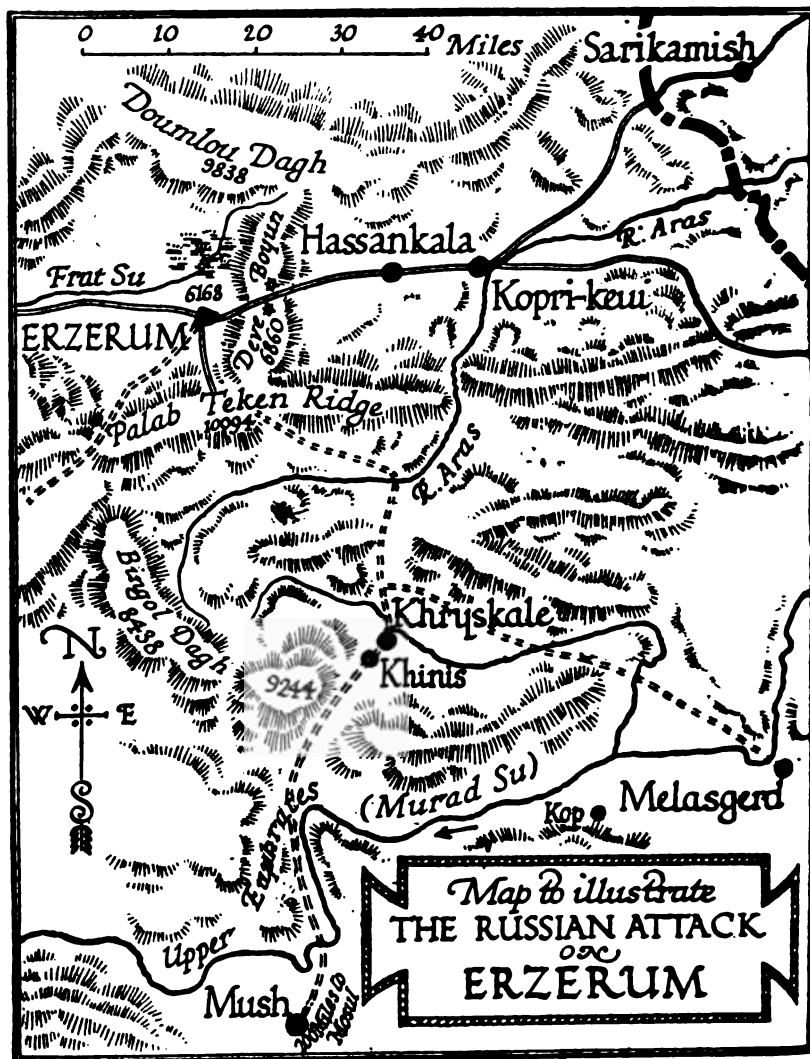
1916

The Caucasus front—Grand Duke's offensive—Fall of Erzerum—Its strategic consequences—Russian movement in Persia—Occupation of Hamadan—Kermanahah the centre of the insurrection movement—Strategical importance of Baghdad—General Aylmer attacks the Turks at Felahieh—Failure of the attack—General Townshend's position at Kut-el-Amara—Transfer of responsibility for Mesopotamian operations from the India to the War Office—Functions of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff—Activity of General Ivanoff—Recuperation of the Russian Army—M. Briand's mission to Rome—Strategical error of the Allied Powers—Recrudescence of German attacks on the western front—General Falkenhayn's motives.

THE CAUCASUS FRONT

WHILE General Ivanoff was attacking the Austrians on the Middle Dniester, as described in the last chapter, the Grand Duke Nicholas suddenly launched an offensive movement on the Caucasus front which, coming as a surprise to the Turks, and developing with unexpected rapidity, led to the subsequent conquest of the whole of Armenia, north of the Taurus range of mountains. It will be within recollection that, towards the end of December 1914, a Turkish army composed of three corps, the 9th, 10th, and 11th, under command of General Liman von Sanders, attempted the invasion of the Caucasus, and was decisively defeated at Sari Kamish, the 9th Corps being practically annihilated, while the 11th Corps was driven over the frontier at Kara-Urgan, and took refuge in Erzerum. The 10th Corps, which had reached Ardahan in an attempt to turn the Kars defences, was likewise defeated, and fell back to the valley of the Chorokh. After repelling the invasion the Russian commander, General Judenitch, decided to remain on the defensive instead of pursuing the Turks to Erzerum, while he detached all the troops he could spare to reinforce the Russian army operating in Galicia. The defensive position taken up extended from the Chorokh river to Lake Tortum, and

thence along the caravan road to Bayazid, and down the Turco-Persian frontier to Lake Urmia, the object being to cover the



approaches to Kars and Erivan, and prevent the enemy's incursion into Northern Persia. There was a good deal of desultory fighting during 1915, especially on the flanks, but no

movement of any consequence took place on either side till the Russian commander suddenly took the offensive as stated above.

No connected official report has ever been published of the operations which have taken place, and we have had to depend for information on the very meagre bulletins which are published in Petrograd whenever news reaches the capital from Russian Main Headquarters, the bulletins only reporting bare facts without throwing light on the intentions of the Russian commander, or giving any indication of the objects in view.

The movement about to be described began on Monday, January 10th, when the Russians surrounded Lake Tortum, driving the Turks out of the village of Tew on the north of the lake, and of Ardesch on the south-east. During the next few days the Russians continued to secure their positions on the right flank of their advance, and occupied the small seaport town of Archava on the Black Sea coast. On the 16th a general attack was made all along the centre of the Turkish position, which faced that held by the Russians, from Lake Tortum down to the north of Melasgerd, on the upper Euphrates. The attack was continued on the 17th and 18th, resulting in the complete defeat of the Turks, who were thrown back in disorder along the roads and tracks leading to Erzerum. Kopri-Keui was captured on the 17th, and with it a number of prisoners, and a quantity of war booty fell into Russian hands. On the 20th General Judenitch, who was in executive command of the invading army, followed up his success by taking the fortified town of Hassankala, where he captured 1500 prisoners and found a quantity of war booty. At Hassankala the Russians reached a point only twenty miles from Erzerum, and fifteen from the famous Deve Boyun ridgeway, which has been the scene of many struggles in the past for the possession of the fortress. The ridge rises in places to a height of between two and three thousand feet above the plateau on which Erzerum is situated, 6000 feet above sea-level, and according to the reports of the Russian General Staff, the approaches to the position were covered by eleven forts disposed along the heights. No time was lost in bringing up artillery for attacking the forts, and on February 12th the bombardment began. One of the forts was captured on the 18th, another on the 14th, and on the 15th the remaining nine forts were stormed by the Russians. The key to the stronghold was then in Russian hands. On the 16th the Grand Duke Nicholas, Viceroy of the Caucasus, announced the capture of the fortress, which

surrendered to General Judenitch after "five days of unprecedented assault."

The fall of Erzerum was an event of first-rate military importance, which reflected the highest credit on the Grand Duke Nicholas, who planned the invasion of Armenia, on General Judenitch, who executed the plan, and on the troops who followed his lead to victory. From earliest days Erzerum has been a great strategical *point d'appui*, dominating the main highway from the Black Sea into Asia Minor, and securing the trade route from Trebizond into Persia. The Russians have always coveted the fortress, the possession of which is a necessary condition of their guardianship of the Armenians. In the war of 1829 the place was taken by General Paskevitch, but given back to the Turks by the Treaty of Adrianople. In 1877 the Grand Duke Michael invested Erzerum, but had not succeeded in capturing it when the armistice in 1878 put an end to operations, and the town was surrendered as one of the conditions of a cessation of hostilities. The Berlin Treaty gave Erzerum back to Turkey.

While the main Russian attack was being made on the centre of the Turkish front, with Erzerum as its initial objective, the Russian commander directed simultaneous attacks on both the strategical flanks. The Turks holding the passes in the neighbourhood of Lake Tortum were dislodged from all their positions and driven down to the Doumlu Dag plateau, sixteen miles from Erzerum, the retreat being turned into a complete rout owing to the energetic pursuit of the Russian cavalry. Stragglers got through to Erzerum, but most of the fugitive detachments were either killed by their pursuers or perished from cold and privations. On the Russian left a division advancing from Melasgerd occupied the town of Khryskale after a three-days' battle, the Turks being driven in a southerly direction towards Mush, which is situated a few miles south of the upper Euphrates.

The Turks were clearly surprised, and had no reserves immediately available as reinforcements, but they hurried up troops from Thrace, and others released from the Dardanelles, to check the invasion. If the movement had no further effect, it succeeded in diverting Turkish troops from Europe, and by so doing took some of the pressure off the Salonika front, but there was no withdrawal from Mesopotamia. Armenia was nothing to the Germans: Baghdad everything. It mattered not if the Russians took Erzerum so long as the Turks kept the British out of Baghdad. When the full significance of the



Map to Illustrate the **BRITISH and RUSSIAN**
CONVERGING MOVEMENT on BAGHDAD

Grand Duke's offensive was realised the Turks under German direction made all their movements subservient to the one purpose of preventing the Russians reaching the Tigris valley and intercepting communications between Baghdad and Constantinople. Nesibin, the present terminus of the Baghdad railway,¹ is 140 miles from Mush, and Mosul about the same distance from Lake Van; but the country is mountainous, the roads are bad, and the passes remain blocked with snow for eight months out of the twelve in the year. It is greatly to the credit of the Grand Duke Nicholas that he should have taken the offensive in such a country in midwinter, and his decision to do so shows that he appreciated the value of co-operative effort, without which the Allied Powers cannot make the best use of the forces at their disposal.

RUSSIANS IN PERSIA

About this time another Russian movement was in progress in Persia, but the information concerning the situation was as meagre as that which reached us from the Caucasus front. It will be within recollection that after the failure of Prince Henry of Reuss to bring about a *coup d'état* at Teheran in November 1915, hearing of the advance of Russian troops from Tabriz, he divided his rebel force into two portions, sending one to Kum and the other to Hamadan. The Russian troops went after the rebels with great promptitude, Hamadan being occupied on December 15th and Kum on the 21st, since when these two places have been used as centres for breaking up the rebellion. Prince Henry escaped to Kermanshah and summoned a Turkish force, which had been concentrated at Khanikin, to his assistance. This force entered Kermanshah on January 14th. The Russian commander at Hamadan had meanwhile detached troops to seize Kangawar, which was occupied on January 15th, after which he cleared the country north and south of the Kermanshah road preparatory to advancing on that town.

Kermanshah, a Kurdish town of 80,000 inhabitants, 150 miles from Baghdad, then became the centre of the enemy's activities in western Persia, a motley crowd of malcontent rebels and robber tribesmen, raised and paid by German agents, being collected in and round the town. Prince Henry of Reuss was recalled and replaced by Dr. Vassel, formerly German Consul-General at Baghdad, who had all along been instrumental in directing the insurrectionary movement against the Shah's

¹ It is believed that the Baghdad railway reached Nisibin during the summer of 1916, and that construction is proceeding rapidly towards Mosul.

Government. Though the tribesmen were well equipped with arms and ammunition supplied by their German masters, they were mere hirelings, upon whom no reliance could be placed unless supported by Turkish troops of the Regular Army.

The question is often asked why, with so much on our hands elsewhere, we diverted a large force into Mesopotamia with the intention of occupying Baghdad. Granted the necessity for protecting the British oil wells in the Ahwaz district, we need not have gone beyond Basra to do this, and to have sent General Townshend with an insufficient force 250 miles up the Tigris to attack a city which the Turks were reported to be holding in strength, was, argue the critics, to court unknown risks for no apparent purpose. What is Baghdad to Great Britain? The answer is that Baghdad is on the high road to India, and that fact gives the city a strategical importance which cannot be exaggerated. If a line were drawn from Berlin through Vienna, Constantinople, and Baghdad to Kurachi, it would be nearly straight. When the German railway from Haidar Pasha to Baghdad is completed, the journey from London to Kurachi, which takes fifteen days by the sea route through the Suez Canal, will take eight days by the land route through Baghdad. The Baghdad railway will be the short cut to India. If we could trust the Germans there would be no reason for objecting to their presence in the City of the Caliphs, but with them economic expansion is only used for purposes of political aggression, and were the Germans installed at Baghdad the city would be converted into a powerful offensive *point d'appui* for a descent into the Persian Gulf. So great a menace to the security of our sea route to India must be opposed with all the available strength at our command. Baghdad, moreover, is not only on the highway to India, but is the gateway into Persia, where we and our Russian allies have long established economic interests, which are irreconcilable with the covetous aims of German statesmen. The above considerations leave no doubt in the mind about the necessity for the expedition which the Government of India has sent into Mesopotamia. Whether we went about our task in the right way is another matter, which will be presently discussed, but that the task had to be undertaken is incontestable, and not less so because up till now our efforts have not been crowned with success.

ATTEMPTS TO RELIEVE KUT

When the last chapter of this volume was broken off General Aylmer, who commanded the army destined to relieve General

Townshend's force at Kut-el-Amara, had fought two pitched battles, one at Sheikh Saad, on January 7th and 8th, and another near Orak, where a river, which has no other name than "The Wadi" in the official *communiqués*, rising in the Pushti hills, crosses the Persian frontier and flows into the Tigris. Both battles resulted in British victories, but, as will be remembered, owing partly to the fatigue of his troops, but chiefly to the bad weather, General Aylmer was unable to pursue the Turks, who finally rallied at Umm-el-Henna (Felahieh), twenty-three miles down-stream from Kut-el-Amara. There the Turkish commander took up a very strong defensive position on the north bank of the Tigris with his left resting on the marshy swamp of Suwekie and his right on the river. General Aylmer attacked the position on January 21st under adverse conditions, owing to the tropical rain, which saturated the ground, and made movements slow and difficult. The attack failed, and the British Army had to withdraw to a position 1800 yards from the Turkish entrenchments, where for the moment it remained entrenched.

In the first *communiqué* issued by the India Office on January 22nd it was erroneously stated that the battle of the 21st took place at Essin, which is some seven miles from Kut, and is the identical position from which General Townshend dislodged the Turks on his way to Ctesiphon; but this mistake was corrected in a supplementary *communiqué* issued on the 27th, in which it was stated that the fighting took place, not as previously reported, but twenty-three miles below Kut. Subsequently Mr. Edmund Candler, the British Press representative with the Expeditionary Force, located the site of the battle at Umm-el-Henna, and gave some interesting particulars of the operation in a dispatch sent from Basra on February 2nd. The conditions were wholly favourable for the Turks. The flanks of their position were secured from being turned, while all along the front the enemy had a clear field of fire over a level plain destitute of every vestige of cover. A frontal attack under such conditions could only have been successful if it had been preceded by an overwhelming artillery bombardment, and General Aylmer never had a sufficiency of guns for that purpose. The British losses, as might be expected, were heavy, and there is no reason to doubt the truth of the Turkish report, in which it was stated that 8000 dead bodies had been found in front of their lines. On the 22nd General Aylmer obtained an armistice for the purpose of burying his dead.

After the failure of the attack on January 21st General Aylmer sent little news. On January 16th Sir John Nixon, who had been compelled by ill-health to leave Mesopotamia, published his farewell order on handing over his command to Sir Percy Lake, who reached Basra on that day, and joined General Aylmer at Umm-el-Henna on January 26th. A *communiqué* issued in Constantinople on February 4th reported an unsuccessful attempt to have been made by "part" of General Aylmer's troops to advance from Felahieh, while in another *communiqué*, published on the 11th, it was stated that the British force had tried to advance along the right bank of the Tigris, and after "two violent engagements," had been driven back to its original position. No mention was made of these operations by General Aylmer, while Mr. Candler, telegraphing from Basra on February 11th, stated that except for some successful reconnaissances the British troops at Umm-el-Henna had not been engaged since January 21st. In his speech in the House of Lords on February 15th Lord Kitchener said that General Aylmer had found the Turkish position too strong to be forced with the troops under his command, and was awaiting reinforcements before making a further advance to join General Townshend, who had been beleaguered at Kut since the end of November. Owing to the ground occupied by the latter General being raised above river level his troops escaped the worst consequences of the January floods, while the Turkish troops entrenched on the north side of the Tigris loop occupied by General Townshend were flooded out of their trenches, and were compelled to withdraw some 2000 yards to higher ground. According to Mr. Candler's report there were twenty-two rows of deep trenches in the abandoned position, and miles of communicating trenches honeycombing the whole ground. Surprise was sometimes expressed because General Townshend made no attempt to co-operate with General Aylmer by leaving his position and attacking the Turks at Felahie in rear. The time would have come for this when the Turks began to retreat, but if General Townshend had left his position before General Aylmer's expected arrival it would have fallen into the enemy's hands. The object of General Aylmer was not to bring the British force away from Kut, but to help it to retain hold of the position, which was a very strong one, and from which General Townshend had no intention of withdrawing if he could help doing so.

The strategic value of the Kut position can be seen from the map. It is situated at the point where the Shatt-el-Hai

connects the Tigris with the Euphrates at Nasiriyeh, and if the Turks had established themselves in General Townshend's position they could have used the Shatt-el-Hai as a route for reaching the Euphrates and turning the flank of the British position at Kurna. It was to ascertain that the Shatt-el-Hai was clear of the enemy that Sir Percy Lake ordered General Brooking to take a reconnoitring column up the river from Nasiriyeh during the first week in February. Finding no sign of any Turkish movement in this direction, General Brooking was on his way back to Nasiriyeh when he was attacked near Butaniyeh on February 7th by some hostile Arabs, who were joined by tribes believed to be friendly. A sharp fight ensued, the British losing 878 killed and wounded, while the Arabs lost 636 men killed alone. A punitive expedition was promptly sent out on the 9th and inflicted exemplary punishment on the treacherous tribes, four of their villages being destroyed. The incident was without military importance except as showing that no reliance could be placed on the good faith of the tribesmen, who throw off the friendly mask whenever a chance of plunder comes in their way.

On February 15th an official announcement was made, which practically amounted to a transference of responsibility for the Mesopotamian operations from the India Office to the War Office. All *communiqués* were thenceforth to be issued from the Chief of the Staff's Department, and all Parliamentary questions concerning operations were addressed to representatives of the War Office. This was another step in the direction of separating the military from the political direction of the war. When Lord Kitchener accepted the office of Secretary of State for War in August 1914, the Department of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, which had only been in existence ten years, was without executive responsibility, the Head of the Department and his subordinates being thinkers, planners, and organisers, but in no sense directors. The Adjutant-General issued his orders in the name of the Army Council, and so did the Quartermaster-General, while the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, though nominally First Military Member of the Council, had neither authority nor responsibility. It thus happened that Lord Kitchener became his own Chief of the Staff, and during the first eighteen months of the war tacked on his duties as such to those of a Cabinet Minister responsible to Parliament. This procedure, which was unknown to the Constitution, was changed by the Order in Council of January 27th 1916, which charged the Chief of the Imperial General

Staff with responsibility for issuing the orders of the Government in regard to military operations. The Secretary of State ceased under this Order in Council to be an executive officer, and reverted to the position which was marked out for him by constitutional practice. He conveyed the orders of Government to the Chief of the Staff, and then left him a free hand to carry out those orders in conformity with his own military judgment. Under this procedure the functions of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff are assimilated to those of his German prototype, only there is this difference between the relative positions of Sir William Robertson and General Falkenhayn: the former is responsible to the Cabinet, and through the Cabinet to Parliament, while the latter is directly responsible to the Kaiser.

THE RUSSIAN FRONT

On their western front during the period under review in this chapter the Russians continued to develop the offensive, which was initiated in December, and to which attention was invited in the last chapter. In the northern sector of the front effort was directed to gradually elbowing the Germans out of their positions facing Riga and Dwinsk, and with this object incessant local attacks were made, the effect of which was to deprive the Germans of the winter's rest which they were promised by Field-Marshal Hindenburg after their strenuous exertions during the summer campaign. Neither in their positions facing Riga or Dwinsk were the Germans within nine miles of those towns, while the capture of the village of Garbunovka on February 11th pushed back the enemy's lines half a mile further to the northwest of the Dwinsk bridge-head. A marked feature of the operations on this front during the month of February was the continuous artillery duel, in which the Russians held their own with the German artillerists. In the central sector, north of the Pripet, there was desultory skirmishing throughout the month without leading to any change in the *status quo*, but the activity of the Russian offensive was as pronounced in this part of the front as elsewhere. South of the Pripet General Ivanoff was as active as usual, especially on the Middle Strypa and on the Bukovina frontier. There the Austrians were reinforced by strong German contingents withdrawn from the Serbian theatre of war, while Czernowitz was protected by a perfect labyrinth of entrenchments, making Russian progress slow and costly. On February 9th a Petrograd *communiqué* announced the capture of Uscieczko, near which the Austrians

had constructed a formidable bridge-head defending the passage over the Dniester at this point. The *communiqué* stated that Russian troops had crossed to the right bank, and the Petrograd correspondents of the London newspapers emphasised the importance of what was considered to be a great victory, pointing out that a salient had been thrust into the enemy's lines between the armies of General Pflanzer-Baltin operating in the Bukovina and General Bothmer defending the line of the Strypa. On February 18th, however, a Vienna *communiqué* was issued denying the Russian claim to the occupation of Uscieczko, and stating that the situation on the Dniester was unchanged. The town, according to the Austrian General Staff, had been entered for a short time by Russian cavalry patrols, but these had been driven out, and it remained in Austrian occupation. However this may be, it became clear that the Russian offensive in this locality was more and more pronounced, and that Czernowitz was being threatened from the north as well as from the east.

There was no more hopeful sign of approaching victory at this time than the wonderful recuperation of the Russian Armies under the energetic administration of General Polivanoff, the Minister of War, who in an interview in the first week in February took M. Naudeau, the Petrograd correspondent of the *Paris Journal*, into his confidence, and told him the full story of the untoward Russian collapse last year in Galicia and on the Narew. It was all due to the want of munitions. This was suspected at the time, and it was interesting to know from the official lips of the Russian Minister of War that the suspicions were correct. With a lack of foresight, which was not confined to Russia, the Russians had for years previous to the outbreak of war relied on Germany for most of their war material, and for all the chemical ingredients of explosive shells. The consequence was that when the German source of supply was cut off the Russians had to improvise factories, and make the substances necessary for the manufacture of explosives. This took time, and when Hindenburg launched his offensive at the end of April last year the available supply of ammunition was totally inadequate for the purpose of the campaign, and this was the cause of what really amounted to a *débâcle*. Quick to perceive the cause of disaster, the Russian Government brought about a complete revolution in the industrial life of the country, and, as with Great Britain, so with Russia, the manufacturing activities of the nation were diverted into war channels. So successful was this transformation of effort that General

Polivanoff was able to assure his interviewer that the munition crisis no longer existed, and that he looked forward to the future with complete confidence. "The Russian artillery can now in its turn pour out a hurricane of fire, and make its power felt."

Then as regards the *personnel*, steps had been taken for the better organisation of the men, whom the *levée en masse* had placed at the disposal of the Russian General Staff. The number of recruiting depots had been doubled since the summer of 1915, and there were collected in permanent reserve at these depots not fewer than a million and a half of recruits, which enabled the units at the front to be kept up to their full fighting strength without having to wait weeks and months for reinforcements. Nothing, as General Polivanoff pointed out, is more demoralising for men at the front than to see their units daily growing more and more attenuated without the casualties being replaced. The effect of this astonishing recuperation, both of *personnel* and material, was, as seen in the preceding pages of this chapter, the renewal of the Russian offensive along the European front, as well as in Armenia and Persia, in which direction there is full co-operation between the Russian and British direction of the war.

M. BRIAND'S MISSION TO ROME

The enthusiastic reception of M. Briand at Rome on February 10th promised well for the success of his mission, which had for its object—the words are M. Briand's—"to establish a closer and more fruitful co-operation between the Italians and their Allies." Political co-operation was complete, but military co-operation in the past had been admittedly less so, and this was the supreme want of the moment. The direction in which co-operation could be best applied has been repeatedly put forward in the *Fortnightly Review* record of the war, and must indeed have been apparent to all who have followed recent events in Southern Europe. Italy rightly hesitates to embark on adventures, but in order to secure her political aims her primary object is the same as that of the Allies, namely, to break down the military strength of the Central Powers. For this purpose it is necessary to strike together, and strike at the enemy's heart. We all know what the Italians want, and mean to get—the Italian Trentino and Trieste; but frontal attacks are costly, as General Cadorna has discovered, and the Italian strategist has not yet said his last word. The fate of Trieste

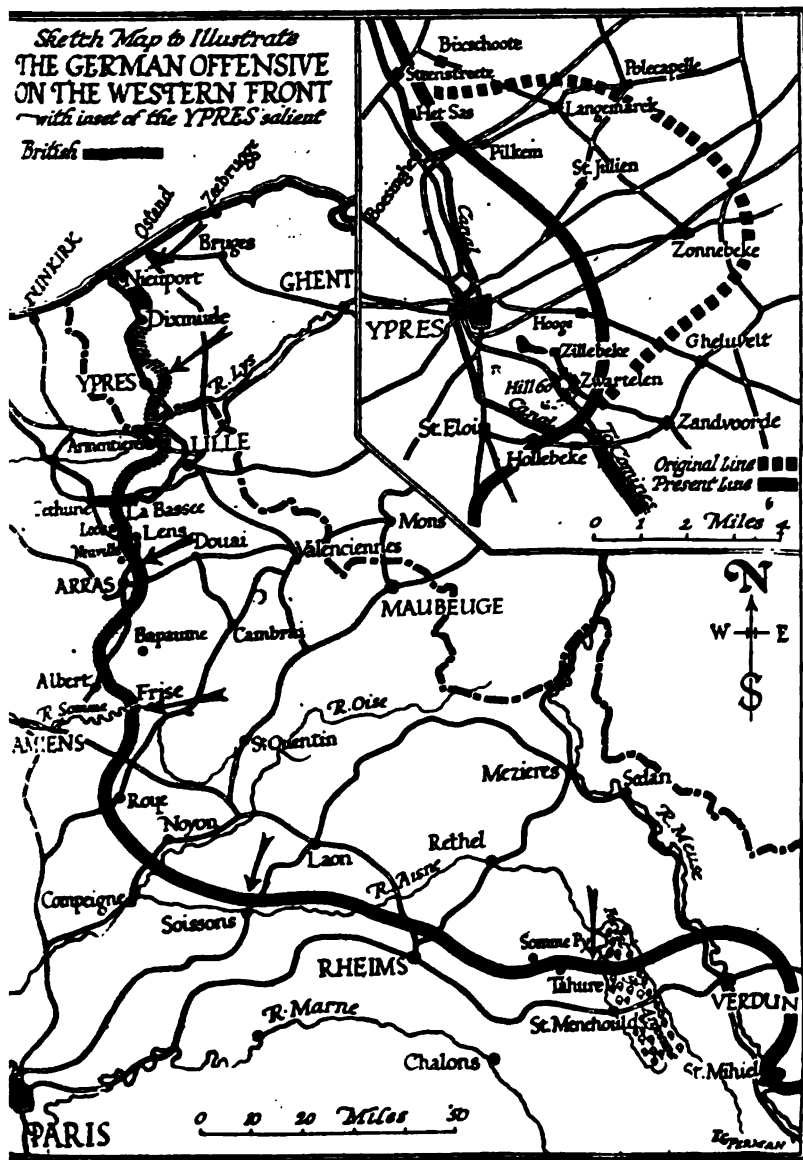
may perhaps be quicker decided on the Danube than on the Isonzo.

There is general agreement that a profound error was committed by the Allies in letting the Central Powers cross the Danube into Serbia. Except along the 250-mile gap between the Adriatic and the Serbo-Roumanian frontier, the Central Powers are blockaded either by ships and soldiers or by neutral territory. There have been wide differences of opinion as to where the Allies should strike to reach the heart of Germany, and there are many who thought, and still think, that our first efforts should be directed towards closing the gateway into the Balkans by reconquering Serbia, and cutting the communications between the Central Powers and their Allies.

THE WESTERN FRONT

On the western front during the first fortnight in February there was a recrudescence of German offensive action, which took the form of reconnaissances in force, not undertaken with any strategical purpose, but with the apparent object of testing the strength of the Allies' position, and discovering any weak points in the front occupied. A skeleton sketch map accompanying this chapter has been drawn to show the approximate position of the opposing forces with arrows directing the eye towards the points which were selected for the enemy's attacks. The sketch also shows the respective fronts occupied by the British and French Armies after the redistribution of the Allied troops in the autumn of 1915. The British right rested on the Somme, close to Frise, whence it extended as shown in the sketch up to Arras, where the French prolonged the line to the vicinity of Loos, from which place the British Army took charge of the front as far as the Pilkem-Boesinghe road, where it linked up with the right wing of the French Army. The total length of the front in British occupation was 65 to 70 miles, while that defended by the French down to the Swiss frontier approximated 400 miles, the Belgians holding twenty miles or so of their own frontier between the sea and Dixmude. No information was forthcoming regarding the distribution of the Allied troops along the front occupied, but the Paris military experts, who were in touch with the French General Staff, located the positions of six German Armies which at the time mentioned were operating against the Allies between the North Sea and the Argonne. The 1st German Army was echeloned in the angle formed by the Oise and Aisne, with its

*Sketch Map to Illustrate
THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE
ON THE WESTERN FRONT
with inset of the YPRES salient*
British ———



headquarters at Laon; the 2nd Army was between the Oise and the Somme, with headquarters at St. Quentin; the 3rd Army was facing the French in Champagne, the 4th was between Ypres and the sea; the 5th was in reserve in Belgium, and the 6th was on the Artois front. Estimates were made of the strength of these armies, but they were based on conjecture, and not on knowledge, as the German General Staff take every possible precaution to ensure secrecy, while false reports are purposely spread to deceive the Allies as to the intentions of their opponents.

Beyond some successful air raids and forays into German trenches, no event of importance took place on the British front till February 12th, when the enemy renewed the attack on the Ypres salient by breaking into the British trenches near Pilkem. The success was short-lived, the Germans being speedily driven out by bombing parties. This attack was followed by a heavy bombardment of the British trenches south of Hooze, between the Ypres-Commines Canal and the Ypres-Commines railway, after which on the night of the 14th-15th the Germans made their way into the advanced British trenches on a front of 600 yards. The success of the attack was due to the explosion of five mines, which rendered the trenches untenable. The Germans still kept their eyes on Ypres, which bars the way to Calais, but it will be noted from the inset on the sketch that the new salient, which had been thrust into their lines at this point, was far more defensible than the one formerly occupied before the German gas attack in the spring of last year. If defence was the only consideration, a still more defensible position would be the line of the Yser Canal, but besides the bad moral effect which retreat from the position would have on the troops who have so long defended it, the surrender of the salient would deprive the British commander of a tactical position, which may some day be of great use for ulterior offensive purposes.

The German attack on the Allies' position near Nieuport opened on January 24th with a violent bombardment, when as many as 20,000 shells were reported to have been fired, but without breaking down the defence, for as soon as the German infantry tried to debouch from their trenches they were driven back to cover by the French artillery, and the attack came to an end without leading to any results. The principal German effort was directed against the French positions west of the Arras-Lens road, where there was some heavy fighting lasting nearly continuously from January 23rd to the 28th. It is

unnecessary to describe this six-day battle in detail because at the end of it there were no results to record. If the Germans took a trench one day they lost it on the next, and when the battle was over the opposing combatants stood practically in the same positions as before the attack was launched.

Of the other attacks, which are located in the sketch, that on January 29th south of the Somme ranks next in importance. The attack covered a front of some four or five kilometres between the villages of Frise and Dompierre, meeting with no success except at Frise, which was held by an advanced outpost of French infantry, and falling into German hands was retained by the enemy, although the trenches south of the village were recovered. Frise was practically the only gain which the Germans could show for their offensive, and it had no tactical value, situated as it was in a *cul-de-sac* formed by a loop in the Somme, which is cut up into marshes and rivulets prohibitive of military movements. Lower down the front detachments of the 1st German Army tried to reach Soissons on February 18th and again on the 14th, but were checked by the fire of the French guns. In Champagne on February 11th the French captured 800 metres of the German first line trenches north-east of Mesnil, and in spite of repeated counter-attacks kept possession of them, but on the 18th they lost a position east of the Tahure-Somme Py road, and only recovered a portion of it. Summing up the situation on February 15th, Colonel Rousset, the French military critic, said that during four weeks the Germans had delivered twenty attacks against the French front without any results worth recording.

What, every one asked, was in General Falkenhayn's mind at this time? Were the operations described above the prelude to an offensive on a large scale undertaken with the strategical object of breaking through the opposing line, or did he intend to remain on the defensive, and await the attack which the Allies were preparing to make? The answer to this question will be found in the next chapter, when an account will be given of the opening phases of the great Battle of Verdun.

CHAPTER XXII

February 18th to March 18th

1916

German offensive against Verdun—German order of battle—Extent of the German preparations—French driven back—Capture of Donauwörth—Successful trench counter-attack—End of the first phase of the battle—Renewal of the fighting—Germans fail to win through—Their impossible task—Strength of the Verdun defences—The Mesopotamian campaign—General Aylmer's defeat at Es Sinn—Public apprehension for the fate of Kut—Russian progress in Armenia—General Baratoff occupies Karnid—Anglo-Russian co-operation.

THE BATTLE OF VERDUN

THE strategical centre of gravity, which in this world-wide war is constantly moving from point to point, and in January 1916 was fixed in Armenia, shifted in February to the west. As was anticipated in the foregoing chapter, the German attacks on the Allies' front in Flanders, Artois, and Champagne, during the last week in January and the first fortnight in February, were only feints made with the purpose of drawing off attention from the German concentration of troops in the wooded country on the right bank of the Meuse between Montmédy and Etain. There a large army, reported with its available reserves to be composed of not less than half a million of men, was collected under cover of the hills and woods which prevented observation either by air or land. The concentration must have been the work of weeks, and was in progress all the time the feint attacks were being made. The French Intelligence Department had some inkling of what was going on, but the full strength and significance of the movement was only discovered after the first attack had been launched.

Lord Northcliffe, who visited Verdun during the first week in March, and who was the guest of General Pétain, commanding the French Army of Verdun, was able to furnish the English Press with some interesting particulars of the constitution of the German attacking armies as gleaned from the data supplied

by prisoners to the French General Staff. According to his report, which was published in *The Times* and other daily papers on March 6th, the approximate German order of battle before the General Reserve was drawn upon to replace casualties was as follows—

Right-flank Army deployed along the line Varennes-Consenvoye-Bois de Haumont.	<div> <div>7th Reserve Corps.</div> <div> <div>2nd Landwehr Division.</div> <div>11th Reserve Division.</div> <div>12th Reserve Division.</div> </div> </div> <div>On the left of this Corps was the 14th Reserve Division. After the first week the 22nd Reserve Division was brought up from Reserve to relieve the 11th Reserve Division.</div>
Central Army on the line Bois de Haumont-Azannes.	<div> <div>18th Corps.</div> <div>3rd Corps.</div> <div>15th Corps.</div> <div>Bavarian Ersatz Division.</div> </div> <div>The 113th Reserve Division replaced the 3rd Army Corps on the 3rd March.</div>
Left-flank Army echeloned right and left of the Verdun-Metz railway at Etain and in the Woivre Plain.	<div> <div>5th Landwehr Division.</div> <div>5th Corps.</div> <div>3rd Bavarian Corps.</div> </div>

On the basis of three divisions to a corps the above estimate would give a strength of twenty-three divisions, amounting approximately, with the artillery units, to 450,000 men; but the estimate took no account of Reserve formations, which were brought up in rear of the fighting line to make good the continuous wastage in the first line units.

No artillery figures are at present available, but some conception of the number of guns which the Germans concentrated against the Verdun salient may be formed from the report of the War Correspondent of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, who after visiting the battlefield narrated his experiences in his newspaper—

“ Over the roads leading towards Verdun artillery and ammunition were brought up in such quantities as the history of war has never seen on such a limited area. The country seemed to be covered with an incredible number of guns. We could hardly believe what we saw round Verdun. Long rows of guns, as in old battle pictures, set up in open fields with gunners standing about them, and on the hill-tops observation posts with their great telescopes uncovered. When I shut my eyes I still see before me those curved lines, row upon row of guns in endless array, with gunners moving about them in the open battlefield.”

All evidence went to show that the German preparations for attacking the Verdun salient were made on a scale never equalled in any previous offensive on the western front. Whether for dynastic or strategical reasons, the German Emperor was clearly determined, as far as he could determine the situation, to win through to Verdun, and by so doing give another proof of the invincibility of the German Army. If he failed, as eventually turned out to be the case, it was not for want of adequate preparations, which were made with the organising ability and foresight always brought to bear on any given military situation by the German General Staff, but because he gave his troops an impossible task to perform. The Russian defeat in Galicia in the spring of 1915 was due to a deficiency of guns and munitions, but in this respect the conditions between Germany and the Allies have now been equalised. We have discovered the secret of the German successes in the early days of the war, and are turning the discovery to good account.

On February 21st the French advanced line of entrenchments on the right bank of the Meuse extended from Brabant on the river side to the village of Azannes, whence the line turned in a south-easterly direction through Fromezey and Hennemont down to the Meuse north of St. Mihiel. It is to be noted that the French were holding the original first line of defence, which was fortified under the Verdun defence scheme proposed by General Séré de Rivières, Director of Fortifications in 1874. That line begins at the Côte de Poivre, which dominates the Meuse valley down to Bras, along the Douamont plateau to Vaux, and then down the Eastern Côte to a point facing the village of Fresnes, whence it returns to the Meuse valley at Haudainville. Taking the lesson of Liège, Namur, and Antwerp to heart in order to prevent the distant bombardment of Verdun by the German artillery, General Sarrail pushed out the Verdun defences on this side of the river as far as the line already described, and by widening and deepening the salient rendered Verdun secure from attack except by a very large force, such as the Germans brought against it. Up to February 21st, 1916, Verdun had been immune from artillery fire.

The battle for Verdun, which has been carried on with a violence and slaughter hitherto unknown in war, began on February 21st, when the German commander, under cover of a violent bombardment, let loose his infantry, organised in phalanx formation, on a narrow front of only eight miles. Surprised by overwhelming numbers, the French vacated their

advanced trenches, which were captured by the Germans along a front of six miles and a depth of about a mile and a half. This opened the battle. Next day the Germans pushed a salient into the French centre at the Haumont Wood, while on the 23rd the villages of Brabant and Haumont were captured and another salient driven into the French left at Samogneux. In spite of heavy losses, the German advance was continued on the 24th and a whole line of villages captured from Cotlettes Farm to Ornes. Then the Germans found themselves up against the Poivre-Douaumont position, on which the French retired after disputing with great tenacity every yard of ground which they left behind them.

On Friday, the 25th, the Germans, thinking to keep the French on the run, attacked and captured the heights of Louvemont, this position giving them a good starting-off point for the assault which was made next day on the Douaumont plateau. Advancing in densely packed formations, driven from behind by their officers, drugged, as we are told, with ether to dull their sense of danger, the unfortunate German soldiers were hurled against the French entrenchments, field and machine guns firing at them at point-blank range and mowing them down in heaps in front of the barbed-wire entanglements. Six times were the assaulting columns repulsed, and it was only when the French ammunition began to run out that the 24th Regiment of Brandenburgers succeeded in a seventh assault in forcing their way into the Douaumont fort and at the same time capturing the village a few hundred yards to the north-west of the fort. For a few hours the fate of Verdun hung in the balance, but French reserves were close at hand, and our brave Allies, pulling themselves together in a brilliant counter-attack, recaptured the village of Douaumont with the positions round it and encircled the fort, which remained in the Brandenburgers' hands. A simultaneous attack on the French right at Poivre Hill was likewise defeated.

The first phase of this titanic battle then came to an end. Surprised, outnumbered, and overwhelmed by the tremendous weight of the blow which the Germans delivered on February 21st, General Pétain wisely decided to fall back on his main position covering Verdun, contract the salient occupied, call up his reserves, and check the progress of the enemy as long as possible by strong rearguards. Saturday, February 26th, was a fateful day. The Douaumont plateau was the key to the outer line of the Verdun defences. If the French had been driven off it, a wedge would have been thrust into the centre

of their position, and their two flank *points d'appui* at Vaux on the right and Poivre Hill on the left would have become untenable. Delivered at the right time and place, and pushed home with decision, the French counter-attack resulted in a tactical success of which our Allies may well be proud, for it saved the situation.

Meanwhile, General Pétain had ordered the troops who had been pushed out towards Etain, and who occupied a line from Fromezey to Hennemont, to vacate these advanced positions and retire on the Meuse heights east of Verdun, a division being left to secure the Eix station on the Metz railway, and another division to hold the village of Fresnes. The retirement was carried out as ordered on the 24th and 25th without pressure from the Germans, who followed up the retreat, but did not seriously attack the French rearguards. By the night of the 25th the Verdun salient had been contracted as shown in the sketch by the dotted line, which indicates the original French position, and by the black line, which marks the altered position. The German all-round gain of ground was approximately four miles.

After the heavy fighting on February 26th there was a lull which lasted till Thursday, March 2nd, when the second phase of the battle opened with another very violent attack on the Douaumont position, the attack being again pushed home with that complete disregard of human life which has marked the conduct of the German leaders throughout the war. The attacks were at first repulsed, but after suffering what the French staff described as "cruel losses" the German infantry succeeded in getting a footing in the village of Douaumont and in capturing the surrounding positions. The success was short-lived, for on the following day the French recovered, by a counter-attack, the positions lost during the previous day's fighting round the village of Douaumont, and forced their way into the village, where hand-to-hand fighting went on for three days, resulting in the Germans securing possession of the centre of the village, while the French held the outskirts and immediate surroundings. A simultaneous attack on the French right at Vaux, undertaken on March 2nd, was repulsed by the French guns before the attacking columns approached the village. On Friday, March 8rd, the second phase of the battle was brought to an end by the French counter-attack, which left the opposing forces much as they were before the second German attack was launched.

The following week opened with a change of plan on the part

of the German commander, who, having failed to storm the Douaumont position by a frontal attack, decided to transfer his offensive to the left bank in order to gain possession of the Côte de l'Oie, which, as will be seen from the sketch, extends in a south-westerly direction for about three miles or more from Hill 860 to Hill 960, the latter hill going by the name of Le Mort Homme. Given full possession of this ridgeway, the Poivre Hill would come under enfilade artillery fire from the left bank, which, it was hoped, would force the French to abandon the position, and leave the riverside road of the Meuse open to Bras. A glance at the map will show that an attack on the Côte de l'Oie from the north is facilitated by the Corbeaux and Cumières Woods, which extend down the northern slopes of the ridge and provide cover for the attacking columns. The key to this position is the Mort Homme Hill, which, rising to a height of 960 feet above sea-level, dominates the whole length of the Côte de l'Oie, and there the French placed a large number of heavy guns protected by a labyrinth of entrenchments.

Before the German attack was made on this side of the Meuse the French line of defence extended along the high ground north of the Malancourt-Béthincourt-Forges road as far as the Meuse opposite Brabant, the Germans being on higher ground north of the French positions. What happened was this: after a bombardment, which increased with violence on March 5th and 6th, on Tuesday, the 7th, a whole German division forced its way through the village of Forges, and, circling round Hill 860, succeeded in storming it. This began a struggle which lasted with great intensity for four consecutive days without any interruption. The fighting was chiefly confined to the Corbeaux Wood, where the Germans took refuge from the French guns, and was continued during the 8th, 9th, and 10th with varying fortunes, but on the last day the enemy managed to clear the Corbeaux Wood of the French, who fell back on the trenches covering the Mort Homme position. Then there was another lull till the afternoon of Tuesday, March 14th, when the Germans sent out their infantry to attack the Mort Homme entrenchments. After violent fighting the enemy gained possession of some trenches south of the spur, which Mort Homme throws off to the north, and which is shown on the sketch as Hill 860, but French counter-attacks with the bayonet and with grenades gave back a portion of the lost ground to the French, and by the night of the 14th General Pétain was able to report that he held a line from Béthincourt to the southern edge of Cumières Wood, crossing the Côte de l'Oie on the north

of the Mort Homme position. On the 15th German Main Headquarters reported that Silesian troops had captured the Mort Homme height, but this was contradicted in a Paris *communiqué* of the same date, which stated that the French held Hill 960, while the Germans had made no advance beyond the northern spur 860. There was no infantry attack on the 15th, but on the afternoon of the 16th the Germans, after a violent bombardment, made another determined but unsuccessful attempt to capture Mort Homme, General Pétain reporting that "the waves of assault were unable to secure a footing at any point, and were compelled to fall back on the Corbeaux Wood, where our concentrated fire, which was immediately let loose, inflicted great loss upon the enemy."

On the right bank of the Meuse, in spite of a renewal of their attacks with greater violence than before, the Germans made no progress during the third week of the battle against the Douaumont-Vaux position. On March 7th they drove the French out of the village of Fresnes, but they still remained down in the Woivre plain, which is little better than a morass in the spring of the year, and which is everywhere dominated by the eastern Côtes de Meuse. On the 8th an attack was launched against the village and fort of Vaux with the intention of turning the right of the French position on the Douaumont plateau. The attack was beaten off, but on the morning of the 9th German Main Headquarters issued a bulletin in which it was stated that "the armed fort of Vaux and numerous adjoining fortified positions were captured in a glorious night attack, after thorough artillery preparation, by the Posen Reserve Regiments Nos. 6 and 9 under the leadership of the commander of the 9th Reserve Division of Infantry, General Guretzky-Cornitz." This report turned out to be an invention, for on the same night a *communiqué* was published by the French General Staff giving a categorical denial to the German allegation, and stating that no German had entered either fort or village. Next day the Berlin *communiqué* admitted that the fort was no longer in their possession. A second attack made on the 9th met with no better success, the German columns being shattered to pieces before they got up to the French entrenchments. On the 10th a third attack, lasting into the night, was so far successful that the German infantry, after suffering what are described as "inconceivable losses," managed to get a footing in the east end of the village of Vaux, while the French retained possession of the west end. Then, while the bombardment continued with unabated violence on both

sides, there was a lull in the infantry fighting till 8 p.m. on the night of March 16th, when a series of very powerful offensive movements was directed by the German commander against the French positions in the village of Vaux and around the fort. "Five successive attacks with heavy effectives," telegraphed General Pétain on the morning of the 17th, "were hurled forward by the Germans in this region without any success. Two were directed against the village, two more against the slopes of the ridge crowned by the fort, and finally one attempted to debouch out of a sunken road south-east of the village of Vaux. All these attacks were shattered by our curtains of fire and by our machine guns, and cost the enemy important sacrifices." This defeat on the right bank of the Meuse was as complete and sanguinary as that which the French inflicted on the Germans earlier in the day on the left bank.

Assuming the political necessity for a successful German offensive, why General Falkenhayn decided to attack the Verdun salient, which is the strongest *point d'appui* on the whole western front, remains a mystery. Its capture, had it been accomplished, would have been a heavy blow to our Allies, since it would have given the enemy possession of a formidable bridge-head, which they would then have used as a starting-off point for another offensive movement into the valley of the Marne. Winning through to Verdun would have practically meant breaking the French centre at its most vital point. If the Germans were established at Verdun it is more than doubtful whether the French position in the Fort d'Argonne would be any longer defensible, and with the Argonne in German hands the right flank of the French army in Champagne would be uncovered. Verdun is the pivot of General Joffre's scheme of defence, and its fall would remove what is at present an insuperable obstacle to the further advance of the Germans westwards. If the Germans knew this, so did the French, and this is why General Sarraill, who preceded General Pétain in command of the Verdun army, devoted months and months of labour last year to perfect the defences of the great frontier fortress, and prevent it falling as a prize into the enemy's hands. Being in antecedent occupation of the heights on both banks of the Meuse north of Consenvoye, the Germans were able to make preparations for their great attack under cover of the dense woods and numerous valleys, which are a marked topographical feature of the country lying between Verdun and the Ardennes; but immunity from observation is not limited to this region, for a concentration could have

been effected with equal secrecy at several points lower down the eastern frontier of France, and notably opposite the forty-mile gap between the entrenched camps of Toul and Epinal, where there would have been the same freedom from observation and greater chances of tactical success.

Having for whatever reason decided to attack the Verdun salient, General Falkenhayn did the best he could to ensure success by making no offensive move till he had collected in the vicinity of the intended place of attack what he conceived to be an overwhelming mass of guns, whose fire would crush French resistance beneath its weight and open the way for the German infantry to walk into Verdun, as last year they walked into Przemyśl. The conditions, however, were different. The Russians were defeated in Galicia because they had an insufficient supply of guns, rifles, and ammunition, but there is no such inequality as between the French and Germans in Lorraine. Starting on his march to Verdun without the initial superiority of *matériel* which Mackensen had when he crossed the Dunajec, the German commander in the first rush of his overpowering attack drove the French out of their advanced positions by sheer weight of numbers, but when our Allies fell back on their reserves of men and guns, success no longer depended on material superiority, since in this respect equality had been established, but on the human fighting powers of the two opposing forces, and whenever Frenchman has met German in the open, during the present war, the result has never been doubtful.

Verdun lends itself to defence in even a greater degree than does Metz. The advanced positions which the French evacuated under sudden pressure from the enemy were only taken up by General Sarraill to protect the town from distant bombardment, and it was always intended in the face of such an offensive as the Germans developed during the last week in February to abandon the outlying posts, remove the civil population from the town, and fall back on the first line of the permanent defences. After being driven back from their outlying positions during the first rush of the German offensive, the French, with one small exception, fell back on the identical first line which was organised by General Séré de Rivières as long ago as 1874, and which has since been brought up to modern date. Beginning on the left bank of the Meuse at Hill 988, north of Esnes, the line runs down the Côte de l'Oie to the Meuse at Cumières, and is taken up on the right bank by the Côtes de Talou and Poivre, and thence along the Douaumont plateau

to Vaux, where it runs down the heights east of the Meuse valley to Rozeller, and regains the river at Haudainville. The exception mentioned above was the small salient driven into the line on the eastern end of the Côte de l'Oie. The permanent forts, as designed in 1874, and afterwards constructed, have been recently dismantled by General Sarraill, who distributed their guns along the front for purposes of mobile defence, but the natural positions remain, and are as formidable as ever under the altered system of defence.

If the Germans were to succeed in breaking through the outer line of defence, the French have a second and third line, both equally strong, to fall back upon, the second line extending from the heights of Montzeville, on the left bank of the Meuse, along the ridge which touches the river at Charny, where the line is prolonged on the right bank along the Côte de Froide Terre to the Tavannes bluff which commands the Verdun-Metz railway. Then in the third line is the Chaume position on the left bank, and on the right bank the Belleville-St. Michel-Belrupt position with its continuous chain of fortified works extending down to the river as far as Fort Haudainville. "Before the Germans can enter Verdun each of the positions described above will have to be carried at the point of the bayonet after guns and machine-guns have done their fell work. How long this will take, and what the cost will be, the writer leaves others to surmise, his own opinion being that the task of winning through is impossible except at a ruinous sacrifice of life, which, if not actually prohibitive, cannot fail to have an exhaustive effect on available reserves, and consequently weaken the enemy's powers of resistance in other parts of the front occupied." The above words, included in inverted commas, were written on the 18th March for the article contributed to the April number of the *Fortnightly Review*, and are now requoted as the record of a correct prophecy.

POSITION ON THE TIGRIS

We left General Aylmer in the last chapter waiting for reinforcements whilst he was facing the Turks in their strong position on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite Umm-el-Henna, from which he had failed to dislodge them in the battle of January 21st. On February 26th a despatch reached London from Mr. Candler, who said General Aylmer had thrown forward his trenches to within 600 yards of the Turkish position, and that a cheery message had been received from General

Townshend, who had sufficient supplies for months to come, and was confident of his ability to hold out till he was relieved. On the 28th the War Office announced that on the morning of the 22nd General Aylmer, advancing up the right bank, had bombarded the Turks on the left bank, and next day had continued his advance in order to bring a reverse fire to bear on the enemy's entrenchments. A further despatch, dated the 26th, announced that there had been "an effective bombardment" of the Umm-el-Henna position, but whether it was sufficiently effective to turn the Turks out of their entrenchments was not stated. On March 9th the War Office issued another *communiqué* stating that General Aylmer had left his camp on March 6th and marched up the right bank of the river to the Es Sin position, which he unsuccessfully attacked on the 8th. According to General Aylmer's report of this battle the enemy suffered "very severely," and was unable to make any counter-attack; while the British casualties were moderate. Next day Sir Percy Lake telegraphed to say that General Aylmer's force, which was operating between seven and eight miles from the Tigris, had been obliged to fall back on the river, but whether the force went back to its original position at Umm-el-Henna, or to a camp nearer Es Sin, was not stated. Nothing more was heard of the force till March 15th, when a curiously vague telegram was received from Sir Percy Lake saying that the Turks had occupied an advanced post on the Tigris, and a British column had been sent out before dawn on the 11th to attack it. The position, wherever it may have been, was assaulted, when, after "bayoneting a considerable number of Turks, the column withdrew, carrying with it two Turkish officers and fifty men as prisoners." The operation was an affair of outposts, and of no significance as regards the main issue.

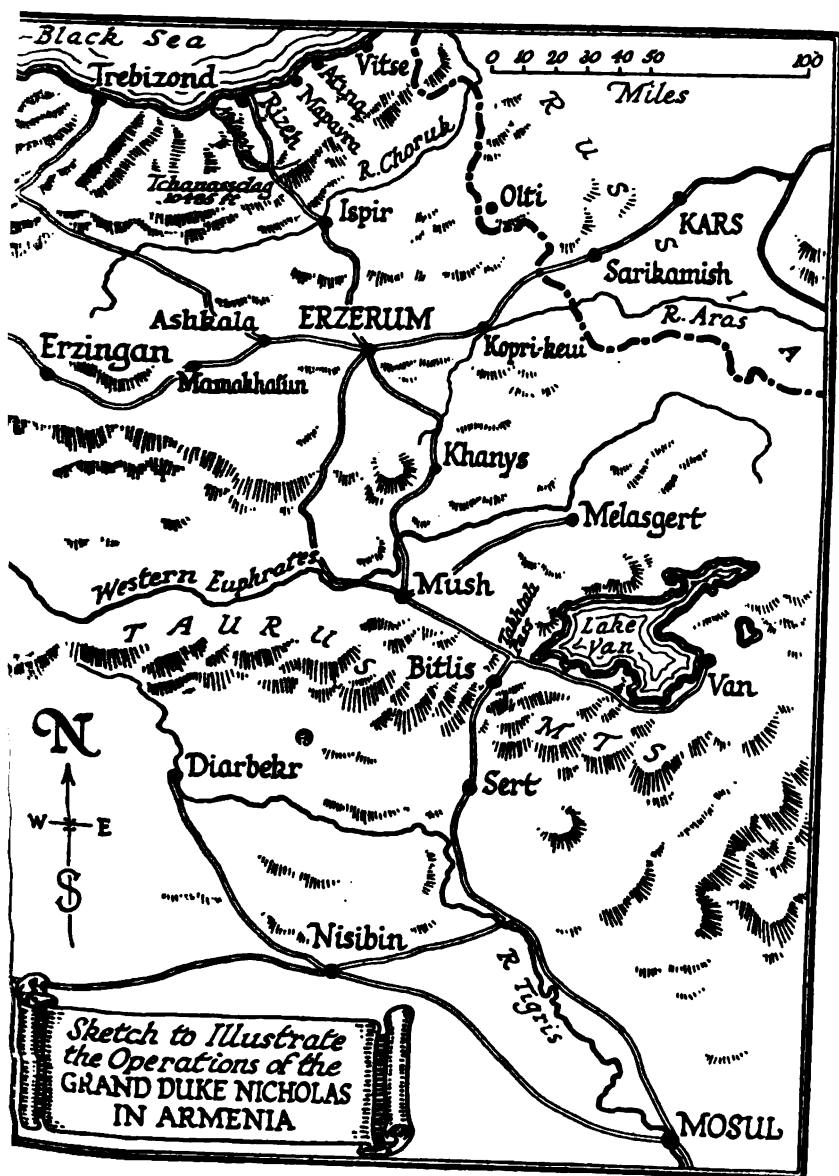
Owing to the meagre and unsatisfying nature of the official information which reached London from the Tigris at this time, the public began to be apprehensive for the fate of General Townshend and his gallant troops. General Aylmer's attempts to relieve the beleaguered force had clearly broken down, and the formidable Turkish army standing between Kut and Umm-el-Henna was undefeated. The position was growing worse by delay. The Turks had been given time to strengthen the lines of Es Sinn, and the task of capturing the position was heavier than before. General Townshend's force had been shut up in Kut for four months, and his supplies were known to be failing. Unless relief came, and that speedily, his surrender was

inevitable. Meanwhile the Government refused to state the number of casualties which had occurred in the Mesopotamia Field Force up to date, the inference being that they had been so heavy as to weaken public faith in the ability of our army to win through to victory. Ministers should dismiss all such thoughts from their minds. The longer the list of casualties the stronger will be the determination of the British people to see the campaign through to its victorious end.

CAMPAIGN IN ARMENIA

While Sir Percy Lake's advance into Mesopotamia was being held up by the Turks, who had at least six, and probably eight, divisions opposing him, the Russians were making rapid strides both in Armenia and Persia, and no longer made any secret of their intention to rescue the whole of Armenia from the Turkish yoke and co-operate with the British Army of the Tigris in seizing Baghdad. After the capture of Erzerum, General Judenich sent three columns in pursuit of the Turks: one towards Erzingan, another along the direct road to Trebizond, while a third was ordered to follow the road to Rizeh and intercept the remnants of the Turkish army which was believed to be trying to reach Trebizond by way of the Chorokh river. We heard little about these three columns, their progress having been delayed by bad weather and by the difficult nature of the ground traversed; but news came that on March 16th the first column occupied the town of Mamakhatun, sixty miles west of Erzerum and half-way to Erzingan, while the second column reached Ashkala at the end of February. The third struck the Chorokh at Ispir on the 26th of the same month. Arrived there, it found its further progress towards Rizeh was held up by the Tchanassdag Pass, 10,485 ft. above sea-level, which at this time of year is impassable for bodies of troops. Thereupon the Russians, having command of the Black Sea, landed a force on March 4th at Atina, sixty miles east of Trebizond, and next day seized Mapavra, a military station between Atina and Rizeh. On the 7th Rizeh was taken, and the Russians, continuing to advance along the coast road, threw the Turks back behind the river Kolopotamos, which is about ten miles west of that town and thirty from Trebizond. The fall of the latter place then became imminent.

The Russian army, which had all along been operating on the left of General Judenich's central left, captured Mush on February 18th, and then turned south towards Bitlis, which



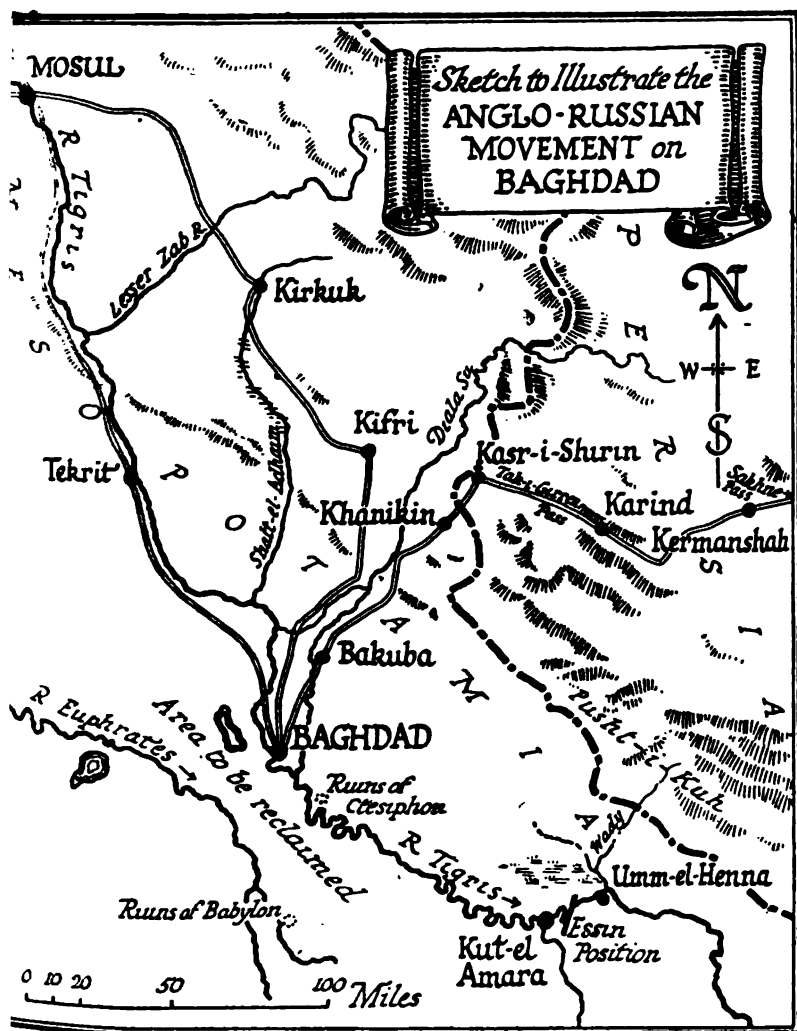
was stormed on the night of March 2nd. Bitlis had been the scene of one of the worst of the recent Armenian massacres, and no quarter was given to the Kurds who were caught in the town. The town is an important strategical point, for it lies on the main high road from Erzerum to Baghdad, and commands the approaches to the Takhtali Pass from the south, this pass being on the extreme eastern spurs of the Taurus range of mountains, which are abruptly brought to an end at Lake Van. Bitlis is fifty miles from the nearest point on the Tigris, 120 miles from Nisibin, the present terminus of the Baghdad railway, and 150 from Mosul. If the Russians could reach Nisibin they would intercept the main line of Turkish communication between Baghdad and Constantinople and get behind the Turkish army operating on the Tigris.

RUSSIAN ADVANCE IN PERSIA

Meanwhile, General Baratoff, the commander of the Russian Army of Persia, after consolidating his position at Hamadan, advanced along the road to Kermanshah, and on February 24th defeated the mongrel army which the Germans had organised for the defence of the Bidesurkh and Sakhne Passes, over which the road lies to the town. Kermanshah was taken by storm on the 26th, and its garrison either put to the sword or sent as prisoners to Teheran to be dealt with by the Shah's Government. The Russian commander then lost no time in pushing his advance farther west, and occupied the town of Karind on March 11th. Karind, 140 miles from Baghdad, and 5350 ft. above sea-level, is situated on the top of the heights which constitute the Great Divide between the plains of Persia and those of Mesopotamia. From this point the caravan road to Baghdad gradually descends through the Tak-i-girren and other passes to Khanikin, the Turco-Persian frontier town, which is forty-five miles from Karind, and ninety-five from Baghdad. When Khanikin has been reached the difficult part of the journey to Baghdad comes to an end, for thenceforward the road runs through open and well-cultivated country till it reaches the Tigris.

Triumphant pæans are out of place till the battle is won, but none the less we owe our congratulations to the Grand Duke Nicholas, who planned his Armenian and Persian campaigns with a correct appreciation of the great issues at stake, and then launched his troops on their way just when their co-operation was wanted by his British Allies on the Tigris. What we were

unable to do for Russia when we failed to open a way for her ships through the Straits of the Dardanelles, Russia is now



doing for herself by the masterly strokes of strategy which have followed one after the other in rapid succession during the past two months. The time cannot be far distant when the army of General Baratoff will link up that of Sir Percy Lake, and by

so doing secure a free outlet for Russian trade into the Persian Gulf.¹ This is not quite the same thing as an outlet into the Mediterranean Sea, but it is a step towards that further and fuller co-operation of effort which will eventually deliver Constantinople into the hands of the Allied Powers.

This is not a local but a world-wide war, and we must wage it on that understanding. A successful decision in the west will not stop the war; we want successful decisions everywhere to do that. The aim of the Allied Powers is to contract the area of country occupied by the enemy and draw the blockading ring closer and closer round the Central Powers till we have throttled them. The subjugation of Turkey is a first necessary step in this direction; others will follow in due course. Our task is heavy, but all the more for that reason is it worthy. We are up against an implacable foe, who will fight till his power to fight any longer is taken from him. The German people want peace, but peace on their own conditions, and these the Allied Powers will never accept. This is a war *a outrance*, which German victories only prolong, while a series of decisive German defeats will bring it to an end.

¹ When these words were written there was every hope that Kut would be relieved, and that a joint Anglo-Russian advance on Baghdad would then take place. General Baratoff, with commendable energy, had done his share of the task, and was waiting for General Aylmer to do his. Unfortunately he let his chance of success slip from his hands on the 8th March, when, owing to a grievous miscarriage of arrangements, his force was thrown back from Es Sinn just when victory was within his grasp.

CHAPTER XXIII

March 18th to April 18th

1916

The battle round Verdun—Failure of German attacks—Heavy enemy losses—Position on the Tigris—General Gorringe captures the Felahieh defences—Turks retreat to Sanna-i-Yat—Failure of General Gorringe's attack—Critical position of General Townshend—Extension of the British front in France—Capture of trenches in the St. Eloi salient—Comparison between British and German infantry tactics—General Kuropatkin takes the offensive—General Brusiloff relieves General Ivanoff—Russians in Armenia and Persia—Campaign in German East Africa.

BATTLE OF VERDUN

DURING the period covered by this chapter the battle round Verdun continued with a fury which increased rather than diminished with each successive German defeat. Beaten first on one side of the Meuse and then on the other, the Germans again and again returned to the attack with a persistent determination, which they had never before shown when baffled in their immediate object, and which can only be accounted for by the high value they set on the accomplishment of their purpose to capture the great French fortress which bars their way to Paris.

The sketch drawn to illustrate this chapter (see p. 321) covers the whole ground over which fighting took place during the period under review, from Vaux on the east of the Meuse to Avocourt on the west. Allowing for enclaves, the fighting front was less than 25 miles in length, and along this front the Germans concentrated, at the end of March, $24\frac{1}{2}$ divisions, 16 of which were on the right bank of the river and $8\frac{1}{2}$ on the left.¹ The following is the approximate order of battle from left to right, as modified by the redistribution of units which took place since the battle began.²

¹ These data are those furnished to the Military Correspondent of *The Times* by the French General Staff.

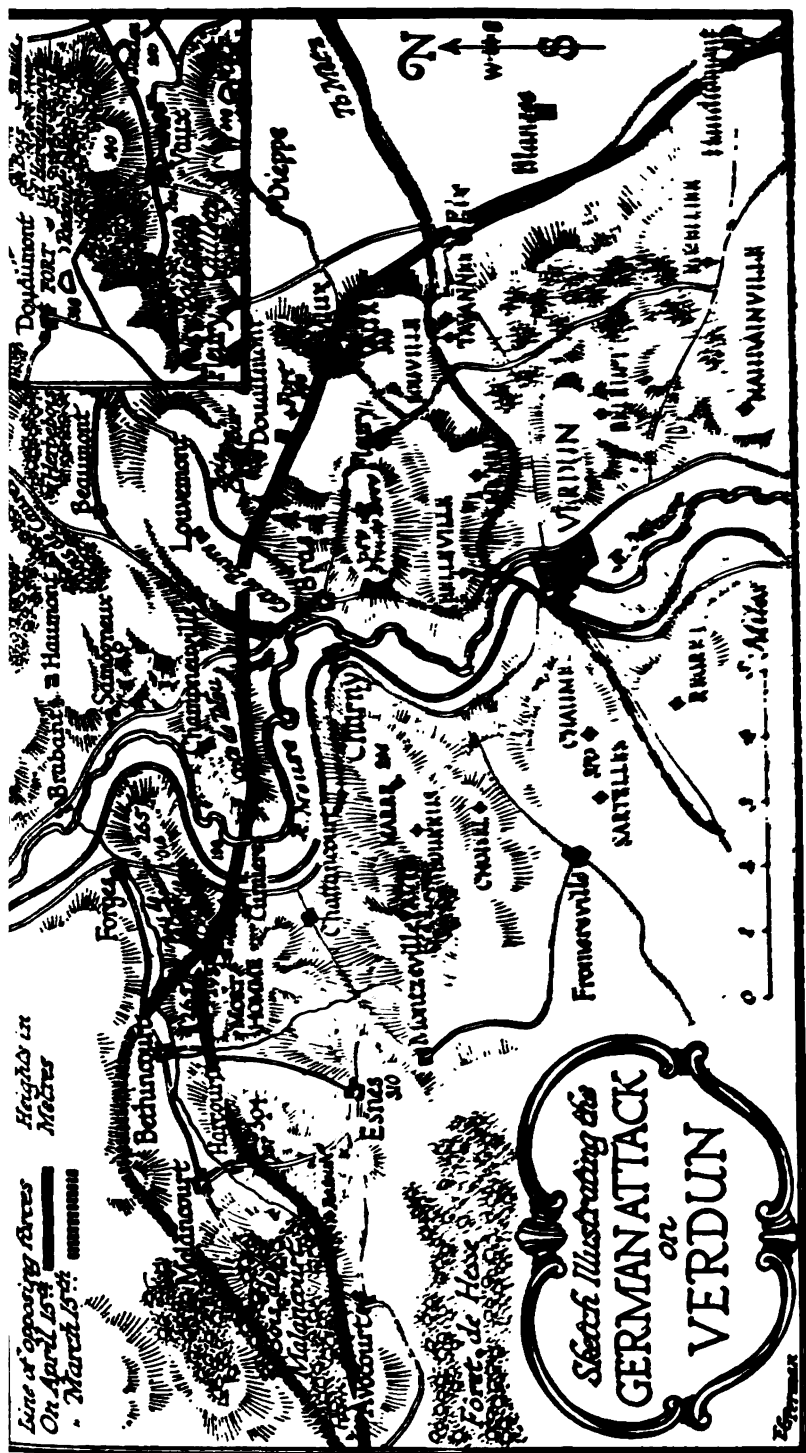
² This order of battle takes no account of the German troops which are facing the Meuse between Haumont and St. Mihiel, and which comprise the 3rd Bavarian Corps, the 33rd Reserve Division, and the 6th Landwehr Division—six divisions in all.

Left wing on the Woëvre plain. (4 Divisions.)	{ Bavarian Ersatz Division. 15th Corps (2 Divisions). A Division from the Russian front.
Central Army, Côte de Talou to Vaux. (12 Divisions.)	{ 5th Reserve Corps (2 Divisions). 7th Reserve Corps (3 Divisions). 121st, 58th, 113th Divisions. 18th Corps, temporarily withdrawn to refit. 3rd Corps, temporarily withdrawn to refit.
Right wing, west of the Meuse. (8½ Divisions.)	{ 10th Reserve Corps (2 Divisions). 8th Reserve Corps (2 Divisions). 192nd Brigade. 11th Bavarian Division. 2nd Landwehr Division. 16th Corps (2 Divisions).

Twenty-four and a half divisions, with their attendant artillery, would give an approximate yield of half a million of men distributed over a front of 25 miles, or about 20,000 men to the mile. So large a concentration on so narrow a front is unprecedented in war, and accounts for the interminable relays of men which were sent, one after the other, in what the Paris *communiqués* described as "never-ending waves" against the French positions.

Fighting both by day and night was nearly continuous throughout the month, the enemy's principal efforts being directed on the west of the Meuse against Hills 295 (Mort Homme) and 304, which stand out like a pair of twins, dominating all the approaches to Verdun from the west, and preventing the Germans getting their batteries into position on the Côte de l'Oie in order to enfilade the French entrenchments on the right bank. Given possession of these two hills, and the Côte de Poivre, the central pivot of the Verdun defences, will at once come under fire from the Côte de l'Oie, which is neutralised by the domination of the Mort Homme batteries. The Germans were firmly established in the Corbeaux Wood, but when they tried to debouch they were met by "curtains" of artillery fire, which speedily sent them back to cover. The fate of Verdun always depended upon the possession of Hills 304 and 295.

The following is a brief *résumé* of the operations which took place round Verdun after the 18th March, when the record was broken off in the last chapter. On that day the French front was approximately as shown by the dotted line on the sketch, two salients jutting out into the German lines at Béthincourt and Malancourt. The first task which the German commander set himself to perform was to straighten out these



two salients so as to enable him to use the villages of Béthincourt and Malancourt as offensive *points d'appui* for attacking Hills 295 and 304. The Malancourt salient was first attacked. On March 20th the French positions north of the Avocourt-Malancourt road were assaulted all along the line occupied, and during the night German infantry detachments succeeded in fighting their way into the south-eastern part of Avocourt Wood, but failed to debouch from cover when they came under fire from Hills 287 and 304. On the next day Hill 304 was submitted to a violent bombardment with the hope of silencing the French guns, but the bombardment failed in its object, for when the Germans tried to debouch from Avocourt Wood on the 22nd they were unable to reach even the lower slopes of the hill, and only succeeded, during the night, in occupying a small knoll on the south-west of Malancourt. Then there was a period of comparative calm, which was only broken by the continuous bombardment, and which lasted till March 28th, on which day the German commander attacked the Haucourt-Malancourt front from the west, but was beaten off. Returning to the attack on the 29th, and employing large masses of men, the Germans succeeded in setting foot in an advanced work north of Malancourt, and subsequently in capturing two houses in the village. The German gain was, however, neutralised by a French success in Avocourt Wood, when our Allies, taking the offensive, recaptured the south-eastern corner of the wood, and stormed the Avocourt redoubt, which had been strongly fortified by the Germans. Fully alive to the tactical value of this wood, which flanks the direct approach to Hill 304, the German commander endeavoured to recover possession of it by a series of violent counter-attacks, which were continued during the night, but without success. "All the German assaults were repulsed by our curtain and machine-gun fire, and by the fire of our infantry, which caused great havoc in the ranks of the enemy, especially in front of the Avocourt redoubt, where the Germans left heaps of corpses."¹ On the 30th there was a lull in the fighting throughout the day, but during the night the Germans launched a series of mass attacks against Malancourt from three sides, when, after a desperate struggle, which lasted till morning and cost the enemy "heavy sacrifices," the French evacuated the village, and fell back on the heights overlooking it on the south. The village was gained by the Germans, but at a cost which paralysed the German offensive for some days to come.

¹ Paris official communiqué, 12 noon, March 30th.

On Friday, March 31st, the battle was renewed, not against Hill 304, but in other sectors of the front. Towards six in the evening, after a violent bombardment of Mort Homme, the Germans made another attempt to reach this hill, which has so often defied their efforts to capture it. Two strong infantry attacks were made without any results. During the first attack the Germans set foot, for a brief space of time, in the French advanced trenches, but a counter-attack drove them back to their lines, and the second assault broke down from the start. While this battle was in progress west of the Meuse, the Germans began a new and simultaneous offensive on the east of the river, directed against the French positions between Fort Douaumont and Vaux village, with the object of getting a footing in the Bois de la Caillette and pushing a salient into the French lines at this point so as to threaten our Allies' position on both the Douaumont and Vaux plateaux. After what the Paris *communiqué* of April 1st described as an "extremely violent bombardment," when the night was well advanced the Germans launched two successive attacks in large numbers organised in phalanx formation, the first of which was turned back by the French fire before it reached our Allies' trenches. The second column, following close on the first, was more successful, for after a keen struggle the Germans succeeded in gaining a footing in the western part of the village of Vaux, which up to that time had been in French possession. Next day the battle was continued by an attempt on the part of the Germans to advance up the ravine between Fort Douaumont and Vaux, but this came to nothing. On Sunday, April 2nd, the struggle was renewed with increased intensity, and at one time the situation became critical, for the Germans succeeded in pushing their way into the Bois de la Caillette and threatening the rear of the French positions immediately south of Fort Douaumont. Always sparing of his men except in case of necessity, when he heard of the danger General Pétain ordered General Balfourier, who by his brilliant counter-stroke saved the situation on February 26th, to take the offensive and recapture the wood. The operation was successfully carried out, and by nightfall on Monday, April 3rd, the French had not only cleared the wood of the Germans, but had reoccupied the western part of the village of Vaux. Refusing to accept defeat, the German commander collected his troops for a final struggle, and at 8 p.m. on the 4th delivered a strong attack on the French lines 800 metres to the south of the village of Douaumont. The attack was a complete failure. "The

successive waves of assault, which were followed by small attacking columns, were mown down by our curtain fire, and had to retreat in disorder towards the Bois du Chaufour, on which our artillery concentrated its fire, inflicting considerable losses on the enemy." ¹

This defeat brought to a temporary end the German offensive against the Douaumont-Vaux position. After four days of continuous fighting, in which many thousands of lives were sacrificed, the position of the opposing forces remained unaltered. The German losses must have been enormous. "Officers who have arrived from Verdun," wrote the military critic of the *Main* newspaper, "unanimously agree that last Friday's attack on the slopes of Fort Vaux was a veritable record in the way of casualties. The Germans were literally mown down by the French fire. Entire ranks fell, and avalanches of dead and dying rolled down the slopes, and lay in big grey heaps at the bottom. When the formation of the ground checked them, the attackers climbed over the bodies of their dead comrades till they were tired, and the assault stopped before the horror of these mountains of corpses."

On April 11th the Germans made one more attempt to break through the French line in this locality, but it had no better success than any of the others, and the position then relapsed into one of stalemate, both sides being entrenched, and neither able to obtain any advantage over the other.

Baffled on the east bank of the Meuse, the Germans once more transferred their activities to the west of the river, and on the night of April 5th directed two separate attacks, one against the village of Béthincourt, on the road to Mort Homme, and a second against Haucourt, which lies at the foot of Hill 287. The attack on Béthincourt broke down, but after "repeated reverses and bloody sacrifices" the German infantry succeeded in fighting their way into Haucourt, though the possession of the village was not worth the cost of its capture; for when the enemy's columns attempted to storm Hill 287 on the 7th the attack completely collapsed, the Germans not being able to advance beyond the foot of the slopes, which remained in French possession. Finding the Béthincourt salient untenable except at a useless sacrifice of life, the French evacuated the village on the night of April 8th, and established a new and continuous line of defence extending from the Avocourt Wood along the foot of the slopes west of Hill 804 to a point north-east of Haucourt, where the line turns east across the Côte de

¹ Paris communiqué, 11 p.m., April 4th.

l'Oie to Cumières, leaving Hill 295 (Mort Homme) on the south. It will be seen that the effect of this retirement was to create a new salient round Hill 304, which occupies a commanding position in the centre of the French enclave.

On April 9th a general action took place along the whole of this new line from Avocourt to Cumières. The German attack everywhere broke down, and at night General Pétain was able to announce that he had inflicted a "sanguinary defeat" on the enemy. At the end of the day the German infantry gained a footing in some of the French advanced trenches on the slopes of Mort Homme, but this slight gain had no effect on the general situation. The attack was renewed on the 10th and 11th, but without any appreciable result for the Germans, the French line of defence remaining intact as approximately indicated on the sketch drawn on page 821.

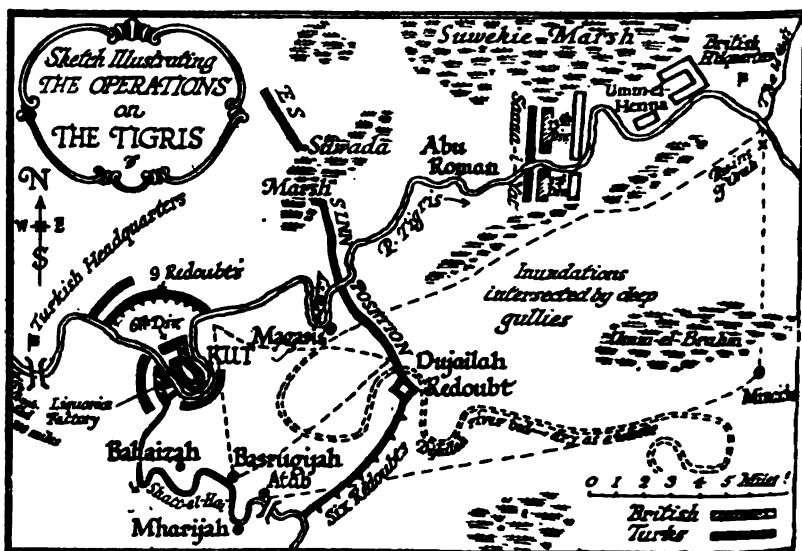
"In war, predictions are more often than not falsified by subsequent events, but in the case of the struggle for Verdun the prophet has the recorded results of a two-months' battle to guide his judgment. Unless some unlikely complication arises, it is within the truth to say that the Germans are pinned to their positions outside Verdun without any prospect of reaching their goal. The fate of the fortress was really decided on February 26th, when General Balfourier delivered that memorable counter-stroke which broke the strength of the German attack. From that day till now the power of the enemy's offensive has been steadily diminishing, while that of the French defensive has been increasing. For the Germans everything depended on the continuity of their first rush, and when that was checked at Douaumont the game was up. On the lowest calculation, the German casualties up to April 1st amounted to 200,000 killed and wounded men, and, except at Douaumont, which was reached before the French had recovered from their surprise, the enemy has not secured a footing on any one of the French positions which constitute the first line of the Verdun defences. The German defeat is incontestable."¹

CAMPAIGN IN MESOPOTAMIA

The situation on the Tigris on April 15th was not as satisfactory as it might have been. Our troops, including those of the beleaguered garrison at Kut, did not number more than three, or at most four, divisions, and they were fighting some

¹ Written on the 18th April for the article which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* on the 1st May.

250 to 300 miles from the sea-base, with only water transport available for bringing up supplies. The Tigris, as always happens in the spring, had overflowed, and the inundations were spreading on both banks of the river, impeding operations and increasing the difficulties of communication. The Turks were better off, being within easy distance of Baghdad, which had been turned into a large supply depot, and was being constantly replenished from Constantinople. They had at least six divisions in position on the Tigris, our troops being outnumbered by two to one. The Turks, moreover, were



standing on the defensive, while the British troops were necessarily attacking in order to raise the siege of Kut.

Attention was called in the last chapter to General Aymer's defeat on March 8th, when he attempted to turn the right of the Turkish position at Es Sinn. The movement was a bold one, and deserved a better fate, for it took the Turks by surprise, the three attacking columns all reaching their destination opposite the Dujailah redoubt (see sketch) at 5 a.m. Unfortunately, though the staff arrangements were excellent, for some reason which has never been yet officially explained the attack, which ought to have been launched at dawn, was delayed till 12 noon, by which time the effects of the surprise

had worn off, and the Turks had hurried up reinforcements to the threatened point. It is understood that General Aymer did not reach Es Sinn before noon, but an explanation is required to show why the general officer on the spot did not take the battle into his own hands, and attack the Turks at daybreak without waiting for orders. Mr. Edmund Candler, who accompanied the expedition to Es Sinn, sent home a short account of the operation, but he threw no light on the causes of the defeat which led to the supersession of General Aymer by Sir George Goringe.

On taking over the command of the Tigris Army Corps, General Goringe had at his disposal two divisions, the 3rd and 18th, the former, commanded by Major-General Keary, operating on the right bank of the Tigris, and the latter on the left bank. The name of the 18th Division commander was not mentioned in any official *communiqué*,¹ but General Goringe was himself present with this division during the fighting on the left bank. At 5 a.m. on April 5th General Goringe began his operations for the relief of Kut by attacking the Turkish advanced positions at Umm-el-Henna. The attack was successful, and by 7 a.m. the whole of the enemy's five lines of entrenchments were in his hands. Simultaneously with this attack General Keary advanced up the right bank of the river with the 3rd Division, and stormed the Turkish trenches opposite the Felahieh position. He subsequently beat off a counter-attack which was launched against him in the afternoon. Felahieh then came under enfilade fire from General Keary's guns, and General Goringe, continuing his advance north of the river, had no difficulty in storming the Turkish position, which was in his hands by 8 p.m.

This was a successful day's work, but the defeated Turks fell back on the Sanna-i-Yat defences, some six miles up-stream from Umm-el-Henna, and were reinforced from reserves at Es Sinn. These defences constituted a strong defensive position extending for two miles on either side of the Tigris, the right resting on the belt of marshy ground which runs parallel to the river for more than twelve miles from near Orah

¹ During the Dardanelles campaign the 18th Division was commanded by Major-General F. C. Shaw, C.B., who was promoted for distinguished service in the field in December 1914, and was highly commended by Sir Ian Hamilton for his services in the Gallipoli Peninsula, but this General has since been appointed Director of Home Defence in England. It has since been ascertained that Major-General F. S. Maude, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., who has recently succeeded Sir Percy Lake as Commander-in-Chief, took the 18th Division to Mesopotamia.

to Es Sinn, and the left on the Suwekie Marsh, which at the time of year is an impassable lake. By April 15th this four-mile front had been contracted owing to the overflow from the Tigris, the inundations having added to the defensive power of the position by reducing the assailable area, and enabling the Turks to concentrate their men and guns on a narrow front. It is hardly surprising that when General Gorringe attacked the position under these conditions on April 9th he failed to carry it. After his failure the floods increased, and on the 12th a hurricane, accompanied by torrents of rain, swept over the district. On the afternoon of that day, continuing to press his attack, General Gorringe forced back the enemy on the right bank for a distance varying from one and a half to three miles, the troops having to cross an inundated belt of land from 500 to 1200 yards wide, intersected by deep irrigation gullies, which impeded their movements. On the same day some of the enemy's trenches on the left bank at Sunna-i-Yat were inundated, the Turks having to take up new positions, and being heavily punished by the British fire on their way back.

The position on April 15th was this: General Townshend, with the remnants of the 6th Division, which had lost between 6000 and 7000 men at and since the battle of Ctesiphon, had been shut up in Kut for 130 days, and had no chance of breaking his way through the investing lines unless help could come from outside. His way out of the Tigris loop, in which he was imprisoned, as will be seen from the sketch drawn for this chapter, was blocked by the river on the east, south, and west,¹ and by the Turkish fortifications on the north. These fortifications consisted of a line of nine redoubts connected together by communication trenches, with a second line of works behind the first line. Supposing the Sunna-i-Yat position to have been either flooded out or captured, there remained the Es Sinn position to be forced, and, after General Aylmer's experiences on March 8th, it was clear that this was no easy task. Strong as this line of defence was when General Townshend forced it on his way to Ctesiphon, it had since been enormously strengthened, and opposed a formidable sixteen-mile barrier to the advance of the relieving army, the right flank resting on the Shatt-el-Hai, which was full to overflowing, and the left on the Suwada Marsh. When the

¹ General Townshend at one time had possession of the liquorice factory on the right bank of the Tigris on the western side of the loop, but this was subsequently given up.

facts of the situation were known at home it was felt that Kut was doomed, owing to the inability of the relieving force to win its way through to the beleaguered garrison. The last phase of these inglorious operations will be reserved for the next chapter.

THE WESTERN FRONT

Two notable events occurred at this time on the British front: the extension of the front occupied, and the capture of two lines of trenches in the German salient at St. Eloi. The first of these events took place early in March, when a British relieved a French Corps in occupation of that part of the Allies' front which lies between Loos and Arras. The British line then extended in unbroken continuity for some eighty miles or more, from Pilken, opposite Boesinghe, on the Yser Canal, down to the Somme, a few miles south of Albert. No formal announcement of this extension was made in either the British or French *communiqués*, but in his despatch of March 23rd Sir Douglas Haig incidentally mentioned the activity of the British artillery in the region of Souchez, and it was afterwards ascertained that British replaced French troops as indicated above, thus setting free a French corps to reinforce the army fighting round Verdun.

The capture of the German trenches in the St. Eloi salient took place on March 27th, when, after the explosion of a mine which destroyed a large portion of the first line trench, two battalions of the Northumberland Fusiliers and Royal Fusiliers rushed the shattered trench and made prisoners of the defenders. So impetuous was the attack, and so determined were the Fusiliers to win through, that, after breaking into the first trench along a front of some 600 yards, they also rushed the second line trench, driving the defenders back to the supporting trenches, which were a thousand yards in rear.

"Before the big scatter of earth had come down," wrote the war correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, "our men were away. In spite of their heavy packs they went onward over their parapets with a rush like a football team in a straight line down to the goal. Two battalions of men got away so quickly that they were out of their own trenches before the enemy's machine-guns had opened fire on our parapet. Only a minute or so after the last rumbling of the mine explosions there was a steady swish of bullets from German machines on each side of the salient, which was a wreckage of earth and

human *débris*, but they were too late. The Fusiliers were well forward beyond their line, and were already flinging themselves upon the barbed wire in the enemy's position. They did not stop to cut the wire. It would have meant death to be held up for that long work. The leading men stormed through it, and over it, tearing their clothes and their hands, and getting over each others' shoulders, flinging themselves into the trench in one great jumbled mass of human energy."

This was only an outpost affair, in which not more than two battalions were engaged, but the success achieved shows what possibilities there were in front of our troops when the next offensive on a large scale was attempted with a strategical object in view. Such attempts were made at Neuve Chapelle and Loos, and failed for well-ascertained causes which are known to be preventable. The inability of the Germans to break through the French lines at Verdun must not be accepted as prohibitive of other attempts made under different tactical conditions, and in localities where the topographical circumstances are more favourable for the attacking side. The Germans could not have chosen a less vulnerable point than Verdun for the supreme effort, which they put forth for so long without achieving any substantial results. Their tactical methods, moreover, never gave any promise of success. Hacking tactics in massed formations are ill-suited for the attack of a position defended by present-day quick-firing guns. The "curtain"¹ of artillery fire is too positively death-dealing to give the phalanx any chance of life when there is a clear field of fire, as is the case at Mort Homme. The success of the phalanx depends upon the weight of its shock, but when its progress has been arrested before it can deliver its blow it ceases to be useful for the purposes of the tactical offensive.

The British method of infantry attack, as developed since the South African War, is as elastic as the German is rigid. Success depends not on the cohesion of the mass, but on the initiative of the individual. At St. Eloi the Fusiliers did not wait to be driven; they went of their own accord, at their own pace, in their own way, just as football players make for their own goal. When once the attack is launched, our men

¹ It should be explained what is meant by "curtain" fire in its application to artillery fighting. The range is first obtained with trial shots, and after verification by the battery observers, salvoes of shrapnel shell are fired at the rate of some twelve to fifteen a minute, the effect being to draw a practically impenetrable curtain of shrapnel bullets across the ground over which the attacking column is advancing.

re trained to act for themselves instead of waiting for orders. Victory comes from below rather than from above. When organisation and training have done their work, the soldier is free to do his. The struggle is one between German collectivism and British individualism. Mass formations have no place in the British system of attack. Numbers are as necessary as ever, but numbers alone will not ensure success when organisation is faulty and training imperfect.

EASTERN THEATRE OF WAR

A sudden and unexpected Russian offensive, which gave the Germans a good deal of concern, took place at the beginning of the third week in March on that part of the eastern frontier which came under the temporary jurisdiction of General Kuropatkin, who recently relieved General Ruzsky in command of the northern group of the Russian armies.¹ The movement—which began on March 21st, when the Russians crossed the Dwina in great force near Jacobstadt—came to an abrupt end during the last few days of the month, when the thaw setting in flooded the country and put a stop to all movements of troops. General Kuropatkin must have foreseen the thaw, and in taking the offensive probably had no other intention than to test the strength of the German defences and ascertain where weak points were to be found. He set his troops in motion not only in the Jacobstadt region, but also in the lake district south of Dwinsk, between Lakes Drisviata and Narotch, where severe fighting, lasting over a week, took place, which ended advantageously for the Russians, but without leading to any material change in the strategical position. In the course of the fighting, which took the form of a series of reconnaissances in force, the Russian commander ascertained that the German defences were all of the same type, consisting of a triple line of trenches provided with steel bomb-proof shelters, and armed with abundance of machine-guns protected by wire entanglements of great depth. On their side the Germans discovered that the Russian armies had recuperated their strength during the winter halt, and were well equipped with guns and munitions.

On April 4th General Ivanoff, the conqueror of Galicia before it was retaken by the Germans, and who had been in charge of the southern group of Russian armies for twenty months,

¹ In August 1916 General Ruzsky was sufficiently recovered from illness to be able to resume his command, and General Kuropatkin was then appointed Governor-General of Turkestan.

resigned his command on the grounds of ill-health, and was succeeded by General Brussiloff, the commander of the 8th Army. Before retiring from the field he had the satisfaction of reporting the capture of the bridge-head at Mikhaltch, three miles up the Dniester from Uscieczko. The Austrians set great value on this bridge-head, and defended it with unusual tenacity, only abandoning the position when attacked by overwhelming numbers. The defenders cut their way through Uscieczko to Zaleszczyki, which remained in Austrian possession, but from some miles below Uscieczko up to the mouth of the Strypa both banks of the Dniester were in Russian hands. General Ivanoff's retirement from active command was a great loss to the Russian Army, but the Emperor appointed him a member of the Council of the Empire, and in that capacity his services will still be available for administrative or advisory work.

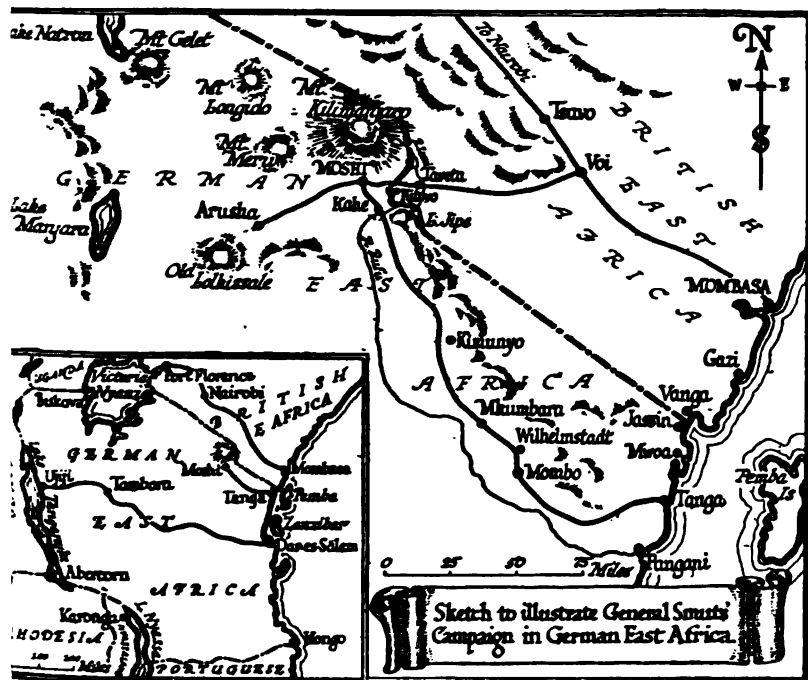
There was little news at this time from either Persia or Armenia. The Russian force which landed at Atina, on the Black Sea coast, on March 4th, reached the Kara Dere, twenty miles from Trebizond, and entrenched itself on the right bank of that river. The garrison of Trebizond was reinforced by troops sent by sea from Constantinople, and convoyed by the *Breslau*, which unexpectedly reappeared in the Black Sea. According to reports from Petrograd the place was held by three Turkish Divisions, but the defences of the town were not believed to be in a good condition to resist attack.

The Russian Army moving south from Lake Van towards the Tigris made slow progress since the capture of Bitlis on March 2nd. There was reason at this time to believe that the Turks had concentrated a considerable force along the line Diarbekr-Nisibin-Mosul, and this accounted for the delay in the Russian advance. Meanwhile, nothing definite was heard of General Baratoff, commanding the Russian Army in Persia since his occupation of the town of Karind, 140 miles from Baghdad, on March 11th. It became clear that our troops on the Tigris would have to rely on their own efforts without expecting help from our Russian Allies.

CAMPAIGN IN GERMAN EAST AFRICA

It will here be convenient to give some account of the operations in German East Africa, the last remaining German colony to come under British subjugation. After the unfortunate affair of Tanga in the autumn of 1914, the British troops in East Africa were ordered to stand on the defensive till

arrangements could be made for an offensive campaign. From time to time the Germans threatened to raid the Uganda railway, but Major-General M. J. Tighe, C.B., who was sent from India to command the troops, had sufficient forces at his disposal to protect the line, and for more than fifteen months the position was one of stalemate. Towards the end of last year South African troops began to arrive at Mombasa, and by the middle of February General Smuts, who had been appointed



to succeed General Smith-Dorrien when that officer was invalided, was ready to take the offensive. Aware of the intended invasion, and of the direction from which it would come along the Voi-Taveta railway, the German commander had concentrated the bulk of his force, the strength of which was reported to be about 30,000, in the Kilimanjaro district, and had selected the Kitovo hills as the place where he intended to make his stand. The position taken up was naturally a strong one owing to the steepness of the spurs, and the difficulty of finding a way through the dense woods which cover the hills.

General Smuts opened the campaign on March 7th, when he seized the passages over the Lumi river and sent on General Van de Venter to occupy Taveta, which he did on the 9th. Moving with great rapidity he attacked the enemy in the Kitovo position on the 11th, and after an obstinate struggle, lasting till midnight, compelled the German troops to fall back on Kahe, whence they made their way to fresh positions on the Rufu river. The retirement was hastened by the appearance of Major-General J. M. Stewart with a mounted brigade, which had made its way from Longido round the north side of Mount Kilimanjaro, and reached the Moshi-Arusha road on the morning of March 12th. The retirement took place just in time to save the force from being surrounded. After this victory General Smuts detached a brigade under General Van de Venter to secure the Arusha district, while with his main force he followed up the Germans, who were retreating to the south. Moshi was occupied on March 13th and Arusha on the 20th. Continuing his advance, General Van de Venter, on the night of the 4th-5th April, surprised and surrounded an enemy's force of some 500 men at Old Lokissale, thirty miles south-west of Arusha, and took the whole number as prisoners. Meanwhile, General Smuts attacked the enemy on the Rufu river on the 21st, and drove him out of his positions, his retreat being nearly intercepted by a mounted brigade, which had made a forced march from Moshi. Both at Kitovo and on the Rufu the German troops, chiefly composed of natives, were well commanded, and managed to extricate themselves from difficult positions without being surrounded.

General Smuts has maintained his reputation as a leader in the field, and has more than justified his selection to succeed General Smith-Dorrien. His campaign was carefully planned and brilliantly executed. By the first week in April the Germans had been twice decisively defeated, and were in full retreat with no avenue of escape open to them. Their position was hopeless, for there was no neutral territory in which they could take refuge. Dar es Salaam and the railway to Lake Tanganyika have now been occupied, and all that remains to be done is to hunt down the refugees, and crush any attempt to carry on guerilla operations. Germany has now been deprived of her last foothold in Africa.

The outlook is improving. We have put our armour on. With two and a half millions in the field and more to come, our belligerent power will soon be felt by land as well as by sea. We are on the eve of big events, which cannot be long delayed.

The goal of effort is ever before us. We are fighting for all that is worth living for—freedom to exist without the constant menace of war hanging over our heads. The German Chancellor asked us to name our peace conditions, and the Prime Minister has done so. The decisive defeat of the German Army is the first and only condition which matters, because when that has been accomplished there will be nothing left to fight about, and peace will come of its own accord.

CHAPTER XXIV

April 18th to May 18th

1916

General Gorringe attacks the Turks at Sanna-i-Yat—Fails to win through—Causes of failure—Fall of Kut—Causes of the British surrender—Responsibility of the "Higher Command"—Campaign in Armenia—Capture of Trebizond—Its use to the Russian Army—Turks concentrate on the line Diarbekr-Erzinjan-Baiburt—Russians menace the Turkish communications with Baghdad—General Baratoff advances to Kasr-i-Shirin—His retreat into Persia—Position round Verdun—Continuous German attacks—Persistence of the Crown Prince of Germany—Extension of the British front.

THE FALL OF KUT

IN the middle of April General Townshend's force was in a precarious condition, having been closely invested for four and a half months in a narrow loop of the Tigris, from which there was no way of escape except by breaking through the powerful line of Turkish fortifications which faced the British encampment on the north. Lieut.-General Sir George Gorringe, who was attempting to relieve his beleaguered colleague at Kut, succeeded, as was seen in the last chapter, in driving the Turks out of their entrenchments at Umm-el-Henna and Felahieh, but he failed to capture the Sanna-i-Yat position when he attacked it on April 9th. After this failure the 3rd Division of the Tigris Corps, under General Keary, advanced up the right bank of the river, and on the 12th April forced the enemy back over a distance varying between one and a half and three miles. On the 15th, 16th, and 17th further progress was made on the right bank, and the situation seemed hopeful, as General Keary had reached a position from which his guns could enfilade the Sanna-i-Yat defences and support another frontal attack by the 18th Division, which had all along been operating on the left bank of the river.

This was the high-water mark of General Keary's advance. for the Turkish commander, seeing his danger in time to avert it, called up reinforcements from Es Sinn and on the 18th made a determined counter-attack on the 3rd British Division with

a force estimated at 10,000 men. The attack began at 7 p.m. and was continued throughout the night till 4.30 a.m. The official *communiqué* did not give many details of the battle, but Mr. Edmund Candler, who was an eye-witness of the fighting, reported six separate assaults to have been made on one British Brigade, which held its ground in spite of the weight of the attack.

"So fierce," he wrote, "was the persistence of the attack that bodies of the enemy broke through a gap between two battalions, though our line held firm. The Turks who thus found themselves in rear of the position were lost, their line of retreat being cut off, while they were ignorant of the disposition of our trenches. At dawn they doubled back in confusion on to our lines, and were all shot down or captured, over 2000 dead being counted next morning at a point opposite this one Brigade alone."

Although this counter-attack failed to overwhelm the 8rd Division it succeeded in checking its further advance, and at some points actually forced back our lines from 500 to 800 yards. The floods added enormously to the difficulties of the troops, who had to move about over bogs and swamps intersected with irrigation channels, and on the morning of April 23rd, when the 18th Division made a second attack on the Sanna-i-Yat defences on the left bank, General Keary was unable to bring any pressure to bear on the Turks across the river. The attack of the 18th Division failed, for reasons explained in General Lake's report to the War Office. Owing to the floods, the assailable front of the enemy's position was so contracted that there was only room for the deployment of one brigade for the frontal attack, and this enabled the Turks to concentrate their main force of men and machine guns at the threatened point. Notwithstanding these desperate tactical conditions, the leading brigade of the division penetrated the enemy's first and second lines through bogs and over submerged trenches, and some few detachments made their way into the third line, but they could not maintain their positions, while the flanking brigades sent up to support them failed to reach their objective owing to the flooded ground over which their advance was made. There was nothing left for the troops to do but to retire from untenable positions and take cover once more in their entrenchments facing the Turkish lines.

When the news of General Gorringe's second failure to win through at Sanna-i-Yat reached London on April 24th, it was realised that the fall of Kut was imminent. The relieving

troops had fought with fine spirit and done all that was possible to succour their beleaguered comrades; but luck was against them, and they were beaten as much by the floods and weather as by the undeniable courage of the Turks, who fought under German leadership with their traditional bravery. Some supplies had been thrown into General Townshend's camp by aeroplanes,¹ and on the night of April 24th a gallant attempt was made to send a ship up the Tigris with provisions for the garrison; but the ship went aground near Magasis, about two miles up-stream from the Es Sinn lines, and was captured by the Turks. Then the end came, and at 4.45 p.m. on Saturday, April 9th, the following announcement was made by the War Office—

“After a resistance protracted for 148 days, and conducted with a gallantry and fortitude that will be for ever memorable, General Townshend has been compelled by the final exhaustion of his supplies to surrender. Before doing so he destroyed his guns and munitions. The force under him consists of 2970 British troops of all ranks and services, some 6000 Indian troops, and their followers.”

In a *communiqué* published in Constantinople on the same day the numbers of prisoners were stated to be: 5 Generals, 277 British and 274 Indian officers, and 18,000 men, the latter figure including the followers, such as syces, grass cutters, water carriers, sweepers, and others, who always accompany an Anglo-Indian army into the field.

Kut was held, as we have been informed, to the very verge of starvation, the daily ration having been reduced to four ounces of flour with a small issue of horseflesh. Before going up to Ctesiphon General Townshend had turned the place into a store depot, and with admirable foresight had collected a large supply of food and ammunition, which enabled him to hold out for nearly five months till the exhaustion of his supplies compelled him to hoist the white flag. The food difficulty was aggravated by the presence of 6000 Arab inhabitants, who feared to leave the town lest they should fall into the hands of the Turks. Before surrendering General Townshend extracted a promise from the Turkish commander, Khalil Pasha, that he would make no reprisals, and would leave the inhabitants unharmed provided

¹ In the House of Commons, on May 10th, Mr. Tennant stated that between April 11th and 29th British aeroplanes had dropped 16,800 lb. of food into Kut, in addition to quantities of medical and others stores and mails. One aeroplane was lost in carrying out these relief operations.

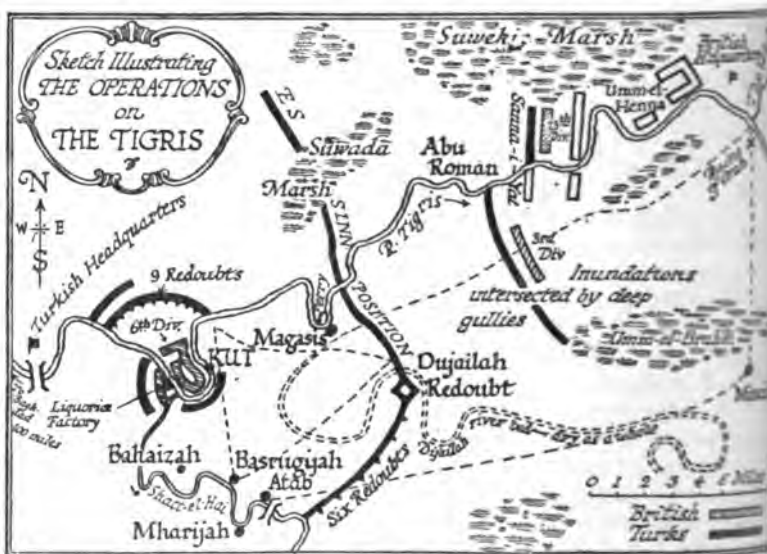
their future conduct was satisfactory. The full story of the siege has yet to be told, but we have heard enough to know that the garrison suffered great privations, which were borne with unflinching fortitude till starvation was the only alternative to surrender.

The fall of Kut was a military disaster which must neither be exaggerated on the one hand nor minimised on the other. The surrender, no matter for what reason, of five British generals, 551 officers and 18,000 men, combatant and non-combatant, could not take place without striking a serious blow at our military prestige. We comforted ourselves with the knowledge that our troops were overwhelmingly outnumbered,¹ but while this exonerates General Townshend and his brave men from any blame or failure, it does not remove responsibility from those who, without counting the cost, placed them in an impossible position. The comparative ease with which the 6th Division, under its able commander, seized Amara and drove the Turks from their position covering Kut misled Sir John Nixon into thinking it possible to take Baghdad by a *coup de main*, and with a force which was inadequate for the purpose. Against his own advice, General Townshend was ordered to advance on Baghdad with a single Division, unsupported by any other troops nearer than Amara, which was 150 miles down river from Aziziyah, General Townshend's advanced base. In his despatch dated January 17th last Sir John Nixon said he knew the Turks had 18,000 men and thirty-eight guns entrenched at Ctesiphon, and that reinforcements were arriving; yet he sent General Townshend to attack the position with a force which did not exceed 15,000 fighting men, when by all the rules of war it should have been one of at least twice that strength. Had General Townshend been able to reach Baghdad his success would have been applauded as a singular stroke of good fortune, but, the result being what it was, the General who ordered the movement should shoulder the blame for committing an error of judgment, which was due to his faulty conception of the strategical possibilities of the situation.

The error was a military, not a political one. From the latter point of view the occupation of Baghdad was an incontestable necessity, the urgency of which has been repeatedly

¹ In his highly interesting despatch of May 3rd Mr. Edmund Candler stated that four infantry divisions with some thousands of tribesmen pursued the 6th Division from Ctesiphon to Kut, and these were subsequently reinforced by the 52nd Turkish Division drawn from the Caucasus front. General Townshend's force was thus outnumbered by more than 5 to 1.

put forward in the pages of this book. The mistake made was in miscalculating the strength of the force required for the successful undertaking of what was a large operation of war. A force which was sufficient to secure a footing at the head of the Persian Gulf and protect the Karun oil-fields from attack was insufficient to leave its sea-base and advance 850 miles up the Tigris with the object of seizing a city which, as must have been known, would be defended to the last by the Turks under German direction. As at the Dardanelles, so in Mesopotamia, the military effort made was incommensurate with



the magnitude of the undertaking. The "Higher Command"—the expression is used as applicable to the supreme military authorities in London—failed to rise to the occasion, and with eyes turned always to the western front regarded the Mesopotamian campaign as one of subsidiary importance which it was the business of the Government of India to see through to a successful finish. The truth is, that in this world-wide war there is no room for subsidiary campaigns. All operations, whatever their purpose and wherever undertaken, have an interdependence which connects them together one with another and gives equal military importance to every theatre of war. The Germans realised this from the beginning of hostilities.

and much of the success which they achieved in the first eighteen months of the war was due to the intensity with which they concentrated effort on any particular operation which Main Headquarters decided to undertake.

The investment of General Townshend's force at Kut synchronised with the withdrawal of the British Army from the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Turkish cordon was drawn round Kut during the first week in December, while Anzac and Suvla were evacuated on the 19th of the same month, and the southern end of the peninsula on January 8th. Then began the race for Mesopotamia, the Turks having the advantage of interior lines, which they turned to the best use. Reinforcements of Turkish troops, released from the Dardanelles, were hurried eastwards along the Baghdad railway to the western terminus of the line at Ras-el-Ain, at which place a motor-car service had been established to link up communications with the rail-head of the Baghdad section of the line at Tekrit. On our side no time was lost in sending troops to Sir Percy Lake from Egypt, but transport by sea is slower than by land. Nevertheless, great exertions must have been made by the Quartermaster-General's Department, for on January 4th General Aylmer's leading troops advanced up river from the concentration rendezvous at Ali Al Gharbi, and on the 7th the Turks were defeated at Shaikh Saad. Falling back on the Wadi position they were again attacked by General Aylmer on the 18th, and were compelled to retire to the entrenchments which had been prepared at Umm-el-Henna. What then took place is fresh in memory. Bad weather set in, the Tigris overflowed its banks and a deadlock ensued. The tactical conditions were so unfavourable that, although offensive operations were continued, they could only be regarded as forlorn hopes. If four divisions had been employed instead of only two the result would have been the same. Where General Gorringe failed no other general would have succeeded. "I have watched your efforts with admiration," telegraphed King George to General Gorringe on May 2nd, "and am satisfied that you have done all that was humanly possible, and will continue to do so in future encounters with the enemy."

The fall of Kut brought the campaign on the Tigris to a temporary end, the approaching hot weather being prohibitory of further operations till the arrival of autumn. Then the campaign will be renewed, for Baghdad must on no account be left in German possession. Its capture will do more than anything else to break the strength of the Turco-German

Alliance, and put an end to the disturbing influence of German aggression in the East.

ARMENIAN CAMPAIGN

During the first fortnight in April the Armenian campaign reached a highly interesting stage. On April 16th the Russian coastal army, which landed at Atina on March 4th, and defeated the Turks on the Kara Dere river on April 14th, continued its advance towards Trebizond, reaching the village of Asseu Kelissi on the night of the 16th, and Dirona, seven miles east of Trebizond on the following day. On the 18th Trebizond was entered without serious opposition, the capture of the town being facilitated by parties of marines and seamen landed from the ships of the fleet which had accompanied the Russian land force during its journey along the coast. After the decisive battle on the 14th, the Turks began to evacuate the town, leaving only a rearguard behind to safeguard their retreat through Gumuskhaneh to Baiburt, but before quitting the town they either carried away or destroyed the guns and war *matériel*, comparatively little booty falling into Russian hands.

Trebizond was of no use to the Turks for military purposes after the Russians had secured command of the Black Sea, and any attempt to defend it would have ended in the garrison being locked up inside the forts surrounding the town and eventually having to surrender. When the covering force failed to stop the Russian advance the Turkish Commander-in-Chief wisely ordered the evacuation of the place in sufficient time to admit of the orderly retreat of the garrison along the road to Baiburt, where the retiring troops, reported to be 60,000 strong, joined the Turkish force already there and formed the left wing of the Turkish armies facing the Russians. While the Turks lost nothing by abandoning Trebizond, the Russians gained possession of an important seaport, which is a ready-made sea-base, and will eventually be of great use to them for supply purposes; but before using it for this purpose the road to Erzerum had to be opened up, and this is what the Turks did their best to prevent by holding the Jevizlika Pass, which commands the road from Trebizond, and equally denies it to a force advancing from Erzerum. The Turks clung to this pass and to Baiburt with great stubbornness and held possession of the entire roadway between them.

After the capture of Erzerum, on February 16th, General Judenitch pursued the Turks with great energy, and struck the

retreating forces some heavy blows as they made their way towards Erzinjan and Baiburt, along their two main lines of retreat. On February 25th his advanced guard troops reached Aschkala (see inset on sketch), and subsequently pushed on to Mamakhatur, which was occupied on March 16th. Another force, detached along the direct road to Rizeh, reached Ispir in the Chorokh valley on February 20th, but was held up there, not by the enemy, but by the snow, which blocked the passes over the Soghanlu Dag, a ridgeway more than 10,000 feet above sea level. Meanwhile the commander of the left wing of the Russian army, which captured Mush two days after the fall of Erzerum, entered Bitlis on March 23rd, after taking the place by storm, and then sent out cavalry detachments to feel their way in the direction of Diarbekr, Sert, and Mosul. Three separate Russian movements were thus launched on their way, each having its definite object: one towards Trebizond, with the intention of linking up with the coastal army which had occupied that town; the second along the road to Erzinjan, the headquarters of the 4th Turkish Corps; and the third towards the Tigris, having for its purpose to intercept communications between Diarbekr and Mosul.

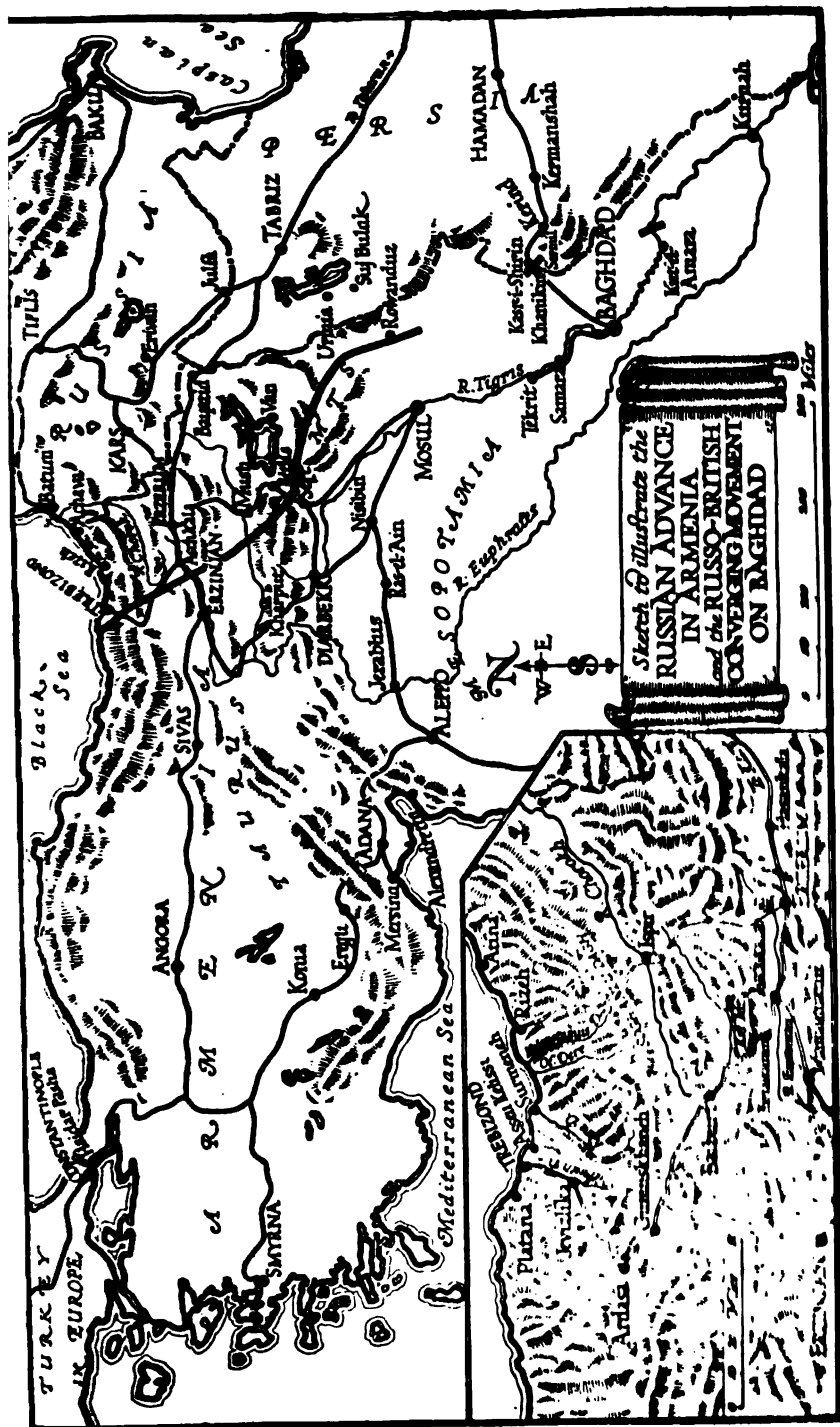
About the middle of April a large number of Turkish Reserve troops arrived from Constantinople and Syria, some being sent to Baiburt, in the upper Chorokh valley, others to reinforce the 3rd Turkish Army, which had fled from Erzerum to Erzinjan, while the remainder were dispatched down the Tigris to replace the casualties in the 6th Turkish Army, which was opposing the British advance up the river to Baghdad and General Baratoff's advance on Khanikin. These large reinforcements were brought up to the front under the direction, as is reported, of Field-Marshal Mackensen, who replaced the deceased Field-Marshal Von der Goltz, and who established his headquarters at Kharput, for a time at any rate. Considering the distances of the rail-heads from the fighting front, and the paucity of good communication, the concentration of the large Turkish forces, which were brought on to the line Diarbekr-Erzinjan-Baiburt, shows what can be done with Turkish troops under the leadership of an experienced commander. In Petrograd it is reported that the Germans have constructed a light railway from Angora to Sivas, and this would account for the acceleration of the concentration; but there is no official confirmation of the report, although it is likely to be true, as the surveys of the extension had been completed before the war and a quantity of railway material collected at Angora. The

rail-head of the Baghdad trunk-line had not been taken beyond Ras-el-Ain in the winter of 1915-16, but as the embankments had been then made as far as Nisibin, it is probable that the rails were laid in the spring. Between this rail-head and Mosul there is a well-organised motor service, and a boat and raft service from the latter place down to Baghdad.

Owing to the vagueness of the official reports, which reached London from both Petrograd and Constantinople, it was not possible at this time to locate with even approximate exactitude the positions of the opposing forces, but it was clear that the Turkish concentration was sufficient to check the advance of the Russian columns in the three directions in which they were moving, and compel General Judenitch to stand on the defensive after withdrawing from some of the advanced positions which his troops seized during the first rush of the pursuit from Erzerum. Continuous heavy fighting took place during the last week in April and first fortnight in May in the region of Kop mountain, which was held by the Turks, without any decisive results. On May 8th the Turks claimed to have taken the offensive successfully and dislodged the Russians from their positions near Pirnakapan, throwing them back on Aschkala; but this movement was speedily checked by Russian counter-attacks, and heavy losses inflicted on the Turks. The main Turkish attack came along the Erzinjan-Aschkala road, where an army, reported to be 100,000 strong, tried to fight its way to Aschkala and threaten Erzerum. On May 18th the Turks claimed, and the Russians admitted, a tactical success somewhere near Mamakhatur, when our Allies lost some ground; but they held on to Aschkala, and the enemy suffered very heavy losses without making any substantial progress.

While the Russian advance from Bitlis also suffered a temporary check, a new and unexpected turn was given to the campaign by the sudden move southwards of the Russian force which had been operating during April against the Kurdish tribes south of Lake Urmia. On May 14th, after defeating and dispersing an enemy's force west of Suj Bulak, the Russians crossed the Turco-Persian frontier, and occupied the town of Rowanduz, about eighty miles east of Mosul, thus menacing the Turkish communications with Baghdad. The Turks were clearly not at first prepared for this movement, but they were reported to hold Mosul in force, and the Russian commander in this region had not sufficient troops to risk a pitched battle for possession of the place.

General Baratoff, commanding the Russian army of Persia,



had meanwhile made a considerable advance in the direction of Baghdad. It will be within recollection that he occupied Kerind on March 12th, and there called a halt for two months in order to secure his flanks and reconstruct the road from Hamadan, which in some places was nothing more than a mule-track, and impracticable for the movement of artillery. At one time it was thought that the Russians would be ready to move early in April, and by so doing remove some of the pressure from the British at Kut-el-Amara; but this expectation was disappointed, and it was not till the first week in May that General Baratoff resumed his interrupted march, and on the 5th attacked and defeated the Turks in a position which they had strongly entrenched at Sermil, seven miles from Kerind. Following up his success, the Russian commander, without giving the enemy time to rally, advanced to Kasr-i-Shirin, which was occupied on the 9th, three guns and a quantity of booty falling into Russian hands. This brought the Russians within a day's march of Khanikin, which the Turks had strongly fortified.

Here it will be convenient to anticipate events which led to the withdrawal of General Baratoff's force into Persia during the month of June. After the fall of Kut a strong force of Regular Turkish troops, said to be two and a half divisions, was dispatched to Khanikin to stop the Russian advance. The Turks reached Khanikin the first week in June, and after a series of fights General Baratoff, whose force was only of the strength of a flying column, fell back on Kasr-i-Shirin, and from there retired into the interior of Persia, where no doubt his force has refitted, and will shortly resume the offensive. General Baratoff's retreat was one of the results of the Kut disaster which happened so opportunely for the Turks when Baghdad was being threatened from two sides.

As will be seen from the sketch on the preceding page, the campaign, which the Grand Duke Nicholas launched on its course at the beginning of last January, was being carried on during the month of May along a front extending for some 700 miles or more from Trebizond to the region of Kut-el-Amara on the Tigris. The front was not continuously occupied by the opposing forces, since, owing to the mountainous nature of the country, there are many localities in which the movements of bodies of troops are impracticable, and in this respect the conditions in Armenia are different from those on the western and eastern fronts in Europe, where the rival armies face one another across an unbroken line of entrenchments.

It is sometimes suggested that if a British force were landed in the neighbourhood of Mersina or Alexandretta, where the Baghdad railway runs perilously near the coast, such an operation would facilitate the combined Russo-British movement on Baghdad by intercepting railway communications between that city and Europe, and diverting troops from Mesopotamia. This would, of course, be the case if the undertaking could be successfully carried out with a force sufficiently large to justify the attempt, but the Germans must have considered the possibility of such a landing, and taken all possible precautionary steps to prevent its success. A speedy decision in Mesopotamia is more likely to be brought about by reinforcing the British Army on the Tigris with all the troops that can be spared from India and Egypt.

BATTLE OF VERDUN

At the end of May, after fighting for twelve weeks, the Germans found themselves pinned to their positions round Verdun without any prospect of reaching their goal. Their armies were no nearer the fortress which they were attacking than they were on February 25th, when they reached the Douaumont plateau in the first rush of the offensive movement. During the period of four weeks covered by this chapter, the gains and losses on either side, insignificant in any case, were about equal; and the line drawn on the sketch which accompanied the last chapter to represent the position of the opposing forces remains unaltered, no alteration having taken place in the general disposition of the troops engaged.

After the four-day battle which lasted from April 9th to 12th, when the Crown Prince launched a general attack along the whole front from Avocourt Wood to Cumières, and failed to break through the French lines of defence at any point, a lull took place in the fighting, and General Pétain published his memorable Order of the Day, thanking the 2nd Army for its past services, and promising it the same success in the future as on "that glorious day" when the German assaults were shattered, one after the other, by the fire of the French guns. "On les aura," said the General with justifiable confidence, which was caught up by his men, whose watchword, "Ils ne passeront pas," was passed from mouth to mouth as they went into battle.

Having failed to make any progress on the west of the Meuse, the Crown Prince determined to try his luck on the east bank,

and after a violent bombardment, which is the inevitable prelude to all infantry attacks, on April 17th he sent no fewer than five divisions against the French positions, extending from the Meuse, opposite Cumières, to the Douaumont plateau. This attack met with no better fate than the one on the other side of the river in the previous week, the enemy being everywhere repulsed, except at one point, where an infantry detachment gained a footing in a small salient to the south of the Bois du Chaffour. Then followed another lull, which the French turned to good account by taking the initiative themselves. On the evening of April 19th they attacked the Germans in their positions north of Vaux pond, and after occupying some of the German first-line trenches, they successfully assaulted a fortified redoubt which had proved very troublesome to the French defence. On this occasion ten officers and 280 men were taken prisoners. Encouraged by this success, they next day took the offensive north of Mort Homme, and recovered most of the ground which they had lost in the great battle of April 10th, four officers and 150 men falling into their hands. On the 21st, and again on the 25th, German counter-attacks to regain the trenches which the French had won back in Mort Homme were both repulsed. Another lull was followed by another French offensive on the 9th and 30th April, when our Allies pushed the Germans farther back from Mort Homme along a front of 1000 yards, and to a depth varying from 330 to 660 yards.

The safety of Mort Homme was now assured, and for the moment it looked as though the German offensive had worn itself out on both banks of the river, and that the initiative had passed into the hands of the French. This was the view taken at the time by the French General Staff, who announced in the semi-official review, which is published daily in Paris to supplement the official *communiqués*, that the "Battle of Verdun had come to an end, and that the check to the enemy's aims might be regarded as final." This, however, turned out to be a too optimistic opinion, for in the first week in May the Crown Prince, or whoever was then in command of the army of the Meuse, made ready to launch another attack with the object, this time, of capturing Hill 304, the tactical key to the whole of the Verdun defence system west of the Meuse. If the Germans could succeed in driving the French off this hill, and in establishing their batteries at the top, the Mort Homme position would be enfladed and no longer tenable by the French. The whole length of the Côte de l'Oie would then fall into the

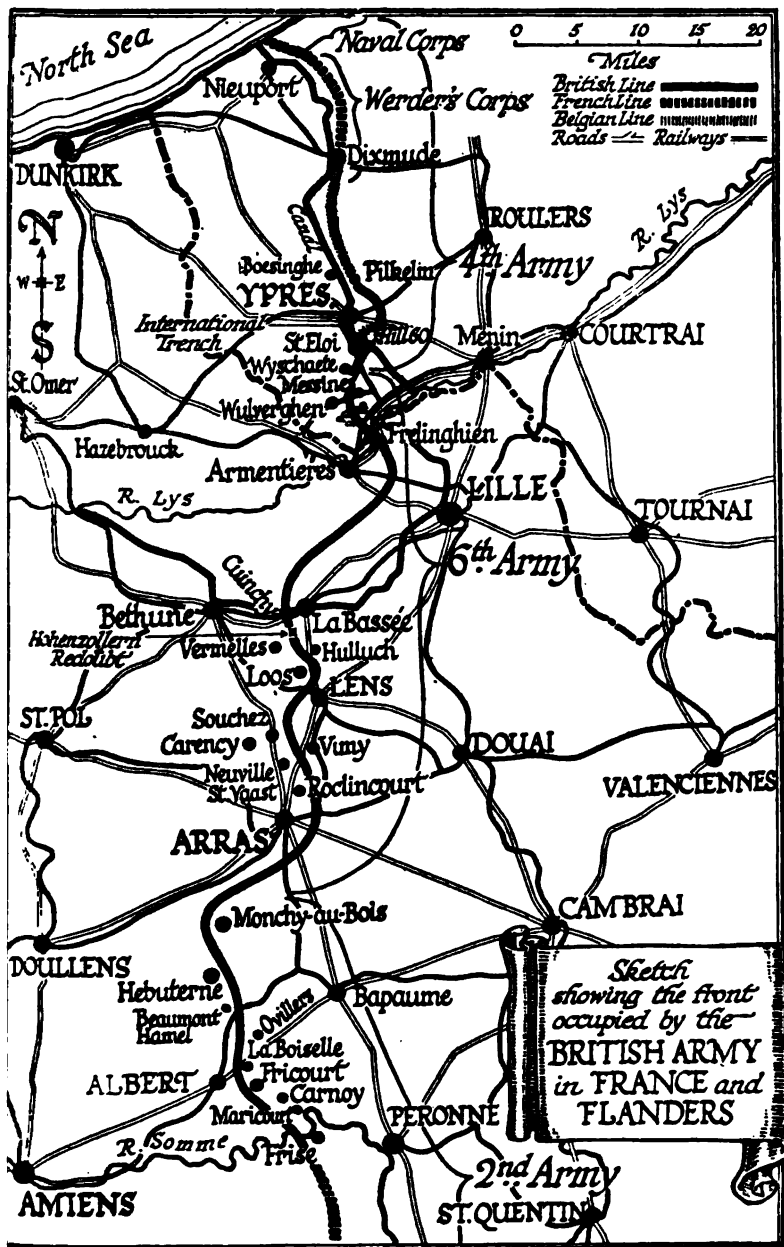
enemy's hands, and this commanding ridge-way would be used as an offensive *point d'appui* for attacking the Côte de Poivre, on the east bank of the river. As long as the French batteries remained on Mort Homme they denied the use of the Côte de l'Oie to the Germans, who were unable to debouch from the Cumières Woods, into which they were driven to take cover when they climbed up the hill.

On May 4th, after collecting all available guns on the heights north of Malancourt and Béthincourt, the German commanders turned their concentrated fire on to Hill 304, the bombardment reaching an "unprecedented pitch of violence" on the night of the 5th, when the French were compelled to evacuate some trenches which they were holding on the northern slope of the hill, and retire to their main positions on the summit. The bombardment was continued with unabated vigour till midday on the 7th, when the battle for Hill 304 reached its climax. Large numbers of fresh troops were brought into the field, and three simultaneous attacks made: one being directed against Hill 287, which is a high spur thrown off by Hill 304 to the south-west; another against the woods on the west slopes of the main hill; while a third was directed against the French entrenchment which dominated the ravine between Hill 304 and Mort Homme. The battle on this day, which lasted all through the night of the 7th and into the morning of the 8th, was one of the most hotly contested battles of the war, and ended in the complete defeat of the Germans, who made no progress in any direction except on the eastern slopes of Hill 304, where they penetrated into a French communication trench, but only to be ejected from it during the night by a brilliant French counter-attack. In the Berlin *communiqué* published on May 8th, German Main Headquarters claimed that the attacking troops had captured the whole trench system on the northern slopes of Hill 304, and had even pushed their advance "up to the hill itself," but General Pétain made it clear in his reports that the summit of the hill remained in French possession, and not a single German soldier had gained the crest. Owing to the precipitous nature of the slopes of Hill 304 the French batteries on the summit, withdrawn some distance from the crest, were unable to fire on the attacking troops as they made their way up the northern face of the hill over dead ground, and the German infantry had a comparatively easy task till reaching the crest, when their further progress was obstructed by an impenetrable curtain of shrapnel through which they did not attempt to advance.

When the battle was over there was a visible slackening of the German offensive. Further attacks were made on May 11th, 12th, and 18th on both sides of the river, but they were of a local nature, and not in pursuance of any considered tactical plan. The tactical methods adopted as the battle progressed indicated a tendency on the part of the Germans to extend the front of attack to their right with the intention of getting round the left of the French positions on Hills 287 and 304 and attacking them from the south. Avocourt Wood, however, stood in the way. When General Pétain recovered possession of this wood he did so after a considerable sacrifice of men, but the gain was worth the cost, for as long as the French held the wood they were in a position to fall on the flank of any German force trying to march across its front in the direction of Esnes. The Germans were aware of the tactical importance of Avocourt Wood, and on the night of May 17th, and again in the evening of the 18th, they attacked the French positions in the wood, but failed to capture them. The attack on the 18th was of a very violent nature, and was carried out by two divisions, which arrived on the front during May.

It is clear that the capture of Verdun was intended to be the great spring *coup* of the German armies in the west. There is no other way of accounting for the persistence of General Falkenhayn and his staff in allowing the Crown Prince to return again and again to the attack long after any reasonable chance of success had passed away. After the continued inactivity of the German Army throughout the winter a decisive success was needed to restore its waning prestige at home and convince the nation of its continued invincibility. Preparations were made for the attack with the same secrecy and thoroughness as marked those of Hindenburg, when he planned the invasion of Galicia in the spring of last year. Failure was unthinkable, for failure at Verdun would have been the first serious reverse experienced by the German Army since its retreat from the Marne. No matter at what cost, victory must be won, and this is the explanation of the suicidal tactics which led the Germans on from one defeat to another.

The sketch facing this page has been drawn to show the extent of the front now occupied by the British Army in the west since, at General Joffre's request, Sir Douglas Haig prolonged his line to the south last March. British troops are now responsible for rather more than ninety miles of front, their right resting on the Somme, and left extending to Pilkem opposite Boesinghe, where it links up with the right of the Belgian Army



deployed along the Yser Canal from Dixmude to the sea. The dispositions of the Allied armies are a closed book, but the general positions of the three enemy armies north of the Somme, together with the sector of the front for which each was responsible at the period under review, are marked on the sketch. It will be seen that the 4th German Army, with headquarters at Roulers, covered the ground between the sea and St. Eloi, while the 6th Army, under Prince Rupert of Bavaria, who is at Lille, took charge from St. Eloi down to Monchy-au-Bois, from where the 2nd Army, whose headquarters were at St. Quentin, faced the Allies down to the Oise. The number and positions of the divisions have not been given, as they were constantly changing, some of them having been withdrawn in April and May from the British front to reinforce the Crown Prince's army on the Meuse. According to the military correspondent of *The Times*, there were forty German Divisions north of the Somme in the month of March, and if maintained at full war strength these would have yielded 800,000 men, but Colonel X., the military critic of the *Journal*, states that while the 6th German Army was intact, the 2nd and 4th Armies had been depleted in strength, and it is doubtful whether in the middle of May there were 500,000 fighting men facing the British front. Without adding to any information, which may already be in possession of the German Staff, it may be stated that the troops under General Haig's command are numerically superior to the Germans facing them; while if there is not already a British preponderance of artillery there soon will be. Although no great battles, such as those round Verdun, took place at this time on the British front, there has been continuous fighting, not a day passing without the report reaching London of a mining operation or a trench raid. The operations have only a local significance, and may be likened to the preliminary sparring of gladiators before they close together in mortal combat.

CHAPTER XXV

May 18th to June 18th

1916

Death of Lord Kitchener—Austrian offensive in the Trentino—Italian retreat—Austrians occupy Asiago and Asiolo—Check in their advance—Italian counter-attacks—Third battle of Ypres—Canadians surprised—Their brilliant counter-attack—The Ypres salient—Struggle round Verdun—Costly German attacks—Germans capture Fort Vaux—The Belleville position—General Brussiloff takes the offensive—Three Russian armies south of the Pripiet—Russians capture Lutsk—General Kaledine's brilliant advance—Bothmer's stand on the Strype—Lechitsky captures Czernowitz—Reconquest of the Bukovina—Great haul of Austrian prisoners—Causes of Brussiloff's success.

DEATH OF LORD KITCHENER

By the untimely death of Lord Kitchener, who lost his life at sea on June 6th, the country has been deprived of the services of the man to whom, when war broke out, it looked above all others to bring it successfully through the great struggle on which it was about to embark. The hold which this distinguished man had over his fellow-countrymen was unique, and is a testimony to the strength of character and steadfastness of purpose which marked the whole course of a life devoted to the public service. So high was his reputation as a soldier-statesman that, in the first fateful week of August 1914, he was nominated by the common consent of the whole nation to the post of Secretary of State for War. Whether he had the qualifications necessary for the position to which he was called people did not stop to inquire; they only saw in him the man of their choice, to whom they instinctively looked to lead them to victory.

As events turned out, it would have been a better arrangement if Lord Kitchener had been appointed Chief of the General Staff, when he could have given his whole time to his military duties instead of having to divert some of his energy into political channels. The functions of the statesman and the soldier are distinct, and attempts to unite them have always

been disappointing. Notably was this so in India, when Lord Kitchener, with the support of the Home Government, but against the considered opinion of every member of the Government of India, succeeded in getting rid of the Military Member of the Viceroy's Council, and tacking his duties as War Minister for India on to his own as Commander-in-Chief. The attempt to do so was a failure, as Lord Kitchener subsequently discovered when he found himself tied to his armchair at Simla, and unable to carry on his executive duties as Commander-in-Chief. During the last three years of his service in India he was rarely seen by the troops he commanded.

When Lord Kitchener came to the War Office, in August 1914, he had no previous experience of its methods, nor had he time, as Lord Haldane had in like circumstances, for a period of preliminary "clear thinking." He had to act at once, and he began with a clean slate. Being a man of masterful personality, and having the unlimited authority of a Cabinet Minister, he started on the colossal task before him in his own way and without enlisting the administrative co-operation of his colleagues on the Army Council. The result was, at first, chaos. The War Office is a huge military hierarchy with wide-spreading ramifications extending into all corners of the Empire; and if there is any dislocation of the higher organisation the entire machine ceases to work in unison, so completely interdependent are its various parts. Ignoring the Territorial organisation, which was a masterpiece of clear thinking and was due to Lord Haldane's creative genius, Lord Kitchener decided to raise a new army on an independent basis, recruiting it side by side with the Territorial Force and in competition with it. This decision led to duality of control and overlapping of effort, which might have been avoided had expansion taken place, as Lord Haldane intended it should do, on the lines of the Territorial organisation.

Lord Kitchener's inability to delegate authority to his colleagues made itself felt during the first six months of the war in all branches of the "Higher Command." Taking the Adjutant-General's Department into his own executive hands, he laboured day and night at the task of raising new armies without leaving himself time either to master the strategical problems involved in waging this world-wide war or to make adequate arrangements for the equipment of the new levies. Misdirection of strategy was the result, and a breakdown in the supply of munitions. Then the Cabinet came to the rescue, and in the spring of 1915 a Ministry of Munitions was set up

outside the War Office, Mr. Lloyd George being appointed Minister with the full authority of Master-General of the Ordnance. Later on in the year the strategical conduct of the war was entrusted to General Sir William Robertson, who was appointed Chief of the General Staff, with executive control over the operations in all theatres of war. By these means order was restored at the War Office, and at the time of Lord Kitchener's death Heads of Departments in Whitehall were working under his direction with a co-operation which was impossible when the whole executive power was concentrated in his own hands.

In spite of defects which interfered with Lord Kitchener's complete usefulness as a public servant, he will go down to history as the man who stepped into the breach in the nation's hour of peril, and gave his life for his country. Without possessing that magnetic power of leadership which characterised men like Wolseley and Roberts, he impressed all around him with the strength of resolution which he brought to bear on his work. His standard of public duty was high, and he never failed to exact from himself what he demanded from others. He has gone from us, but his memory remains to inspire those who come after to follow him along that path of duty which was the goal of his ambition throughout his life.

AUSTRIAN OFFENSIVE IN THE TRENTINO

During the last half of the month of May, as will be seen from the sketch below, our Italian Allies experienced a considerable set-back in the Trentino, the Austrians having suddenly taken the offensive between the Adige and Brenta, and pushed the Italian troops to a depth of some eight or ten miles across the frontier. On May 15th the approximate position of the opposing forces extended, as shown on the sketch, from the north-eastern shore of Lake Garda across the Val Lagarina, a few miles south of Rovereto, up to the Austrian position on the Folgaria-Lavarone plateau, and thence across the Val Sugana to Monte Collo, within ten miles of the fortress of Trent. The Italians fought their way up to this line last year with comparative ease, having been opposed by no more than three Austrian divisions, which fell back to the prepared defensive position on the line Folgaria-Lavarone without attempting a counter-offensive. After the subjugation of Serbia and Montenegro the Austrian General Staff decided to prepare for a spring campaign of their own and break through

the Italian front in the Trentino, with the intention of reaching the Venetian plain and cutting the communications of the Italian Army on the Isonzo with Verona.



During the winter months there was a constant movement of Austrian troops from Galicia and the Balkans to the Trentino front, and, according to information in possession of the Italian General Staff, by the first week in May eighteen divisions, approximately 350,000 men, were concentrated on a fifteen- to

twenty-mile front, along with 2000 guns, many of which were of large calibre. The Archduke Karl-Franz-Joseph was entrusted with the command of the force, with General Konrad Hötzenndorf, the Chief of the General Staff, as his assistant. No German troops were employed on this part of the front.

The Archduke opened his offensive with a bombardment on May 18th and 14th, and on the 15th launched an infantry attack along the whole line. The bombardment was very effective, the Italian guns being outnumbered and outclassed and powerless to keep down the fire of the opposing artillery. Unable to hold their advanced position in the centre of the front attacked, the Italians fell back behind their frontier on the Toraro-Campo Molon position between the Terragnolo and Upper Astico valleys, disputing every yard of the ground over which they retired, and inflicting heavy loss on the enemy. The Archduke pushed his attack in this direction with great energy, and, finding themselves hopelessly outnumbered, the Italians abandoned their position on May 20th, and took up a new battle-front along the north bank of the Posina and the heights covering the approaches to Arsiero and Asiago. On the right flank the Austrians made a simultaneous advance down the Val Sugana, pushing the Italians before them. Borgo was occupied on May 19th, and then the Austrians crossed the Brenta and attacked the Italians on the Armenterra ridge, which was captured on the 21st. Crossing the Maggio on the following day, they seized Monte Civaron, and by the 26th they had secured the whole of the mountain heights down to Meala. Monte Moschicce was stormed on the 27th, and the Interrotto position on the 29th. This opened the road into Asiago, which was occupied on June 1st, the central Austrian column entering Asiero on the same day.

The occupation of these two towns was the high-water mark of the Austrian advance. From the day of their capture the tide began to turn in favour of the Italians. As soon as General Cadorna realised the significance of the Austrian movement he took immediate steps to reinforce his flanks. Reserve troops were hurried up the valleys of both the Brenta and the Adige. Withdrawing the Italian troops from the outlying position of Zugna Torta, which was exposed to the fire of the Rovereto forts, he ordered them to take post on the Coni Zugna ridge, where defensive positions had been prepared in anticipation of a retreat. Knowing the extreme importance of preventing the Austrians moving either down the Val Lagarina to Verona or up the Val Arsa to Schio, he ordered the Coni Zugna position

to be held at all cost. Further steps were taken to strengthen his left wing. On the left bank of the Aⁿa was the Buole Pass, and on the right bank Monte Pasubio, which stands up like a huge sentry more than 7000 feet above sea-level, and dominates both the Arsa and Posina valleys. If these two *points d'appui* were captured by the Austrians, Coni Zugna would be turned, and the Italian left flank rolled up. General Cadorna was fortunately able to get sufficient troops up in time to prevent them falling into the enemy's hands. A great concentration of guns was brought against Pasubio, and a bombardment kept up day and night for three weeks, but no impression was made on its defences, and the infantry attacks never had a chance of success. Round the Buole Pass an infantry battle, which began on May 25th, raged for six days without the Italians yielding an inch of ground. The enemy's casualties were heavy, and on the 30th, the last day of the battle, the loss in killed alone amounted to 7000. On the right flank General Cadorna sent support to the Italian troops holding the group of heights round the Maletta peaks and the Cima della Caldiera, overlooking the Sugana valley. In the first rush of their offensive the Austrians occupied Strigno, on the north bank of the Brenta, but their subsequent efforts to push their way down the river broke down in face of the tenacious resistance put up by the Italians.

Meanwhile, after evacuating Asiago and Arsiero, the Italians in the centre fell back to their second line of defence, known as the Setti Comuni position, which is an elevated plateau extending from the southern banks of the Posina up to the Brenta. The position is one of considerable natural strength, and there had been time to strengthen its defences while the Italian rearguards were delaying the Austrian advance on the upper Astico and Assa valleys. Frequent attempts were made during the first half of June to break through this central position and gain possession of the road to Schio down the Astico valley and of the road to Vastagna down the Frenzela valley. Violent battles took place on June 7th and 8th east of Asiago, and on the 10th a whole Austrian division, eighteen to twenty battalions strong, was hurled against the Italian positions covering the railway to Schio west of Mount Cengio. These attacks were all repulsed with heavy loss to the enemy and without any appreciable gain of ground. The defeat on June 10th brought the Austrian offensive to a close, and the Italians then recovering the initiative began to counter-attack all along the line.

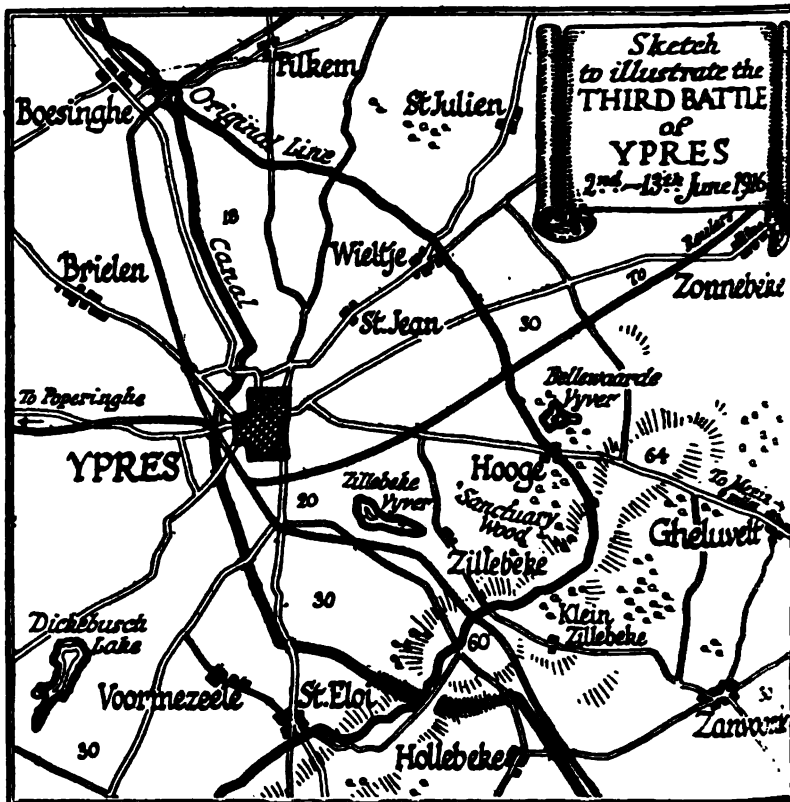
THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES

While these operations were taking place in the Trentino the British were having a lively time all along the line occupied, the chief event being the third German attack on the Ypres salient, the scene of the two tremendous previous battles, the first of which began on October 20th, 1914, and ended with the defeat of the Prussian Guard on November 11th, while the second took place in the spring of 1915, between April 22nd and May 18th. The result of both battles was a decisive German defeat. Ground was lost, but the British line remained unbroken and the road to Calais closed.

The third battle, small as regards the numbers engaged in comparison with the previous encounters, but not less important in regard to the strategical issue at stake, began at nine a.m. on June 2nd, when the enemy suddenly¹ opened his attack with a bombardment directed against that part of the British front which lies between the village of Hooze and Hill 60. The position was held by the 8rd Canadian Division, under command of Major-General M. S. Mercer, C.B., but no order of battle was published by General Headquarters, while the unofficial despatches received from the accredited newspaper correspondents were disjointed and worthless from the military student's point of view. The bombardment lasted four hours, and at noon the infantry attack was launched, as is said, by some nine or ten battalions of the Wurtemberg regiments, who succeeded in penetrating into the first line of the British trenches in spite of the gallant resistance of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Buller, D.S.O., and of the 1st, 4th, and 5th Battalions of the Canadian Mounted Rifles, commanded respectively by Lieut.-Colonels A. E. Shaw, J. F. H. Ussher, and G. H. Baker. All these four commanding officers were killed in the hand-to-hand fight which took place in the trenches, except Lieut.-Colonel Ussher, who was wounded and taken prisoner. Following up this initial advantage obtained by the successful bombardment which had shattered the first line trenches, the Germans continued their attack during the night and pushed through the British defences to a depth of 700 yards in the direction of Zillebeke, the Canadians having retired on their supports to

¹ So sudden and unexpected was this bombardment that Major-General Mercer, commanding the division engaged, and Brigadier-General Williams, commanding the 7th Brigade, were in the trenches at the time inspecting the defending troops, and fell into the hands of the Germans during the infantry attack. General Mercer has since been reported as killed.

organise a counter-attack, which, after a bombardment equal in intensity to that of the enemy's on the previous day, was delivered at seven a.m. on the 3rd. The Canadians fought their way back to their trenches, which they found battered to pieces, with hundreds of German dead lying about unburied, some of the trenches being in such a state as to be untenable. Although



they failed to recover all the ground lost on the previous day, they succeeded in pushing the Germans back for a quarter of a mile and consolidating their new line of defence.

Except for a continuous artillery duel, there was then a lull in the battle till the afternoon of the 6th, when the enemy began another heavy bombardment on the British position at and north of the village of Hooze, while south-east of Zillebeke,

between the Ypres-Commines railway and canal, the bombardment was maintained with the same intensity as before. Between 3 and 4.30 p.m. a series of mine explosions took place at various points on a 2000 yards front north of Hooze, these being the signal for a general infantry attack, which was everywhere unsuccessful except at Hooze, where the Germans succeeded in capturing the British front line trenches running through the ruins of the village. Then there was another lull in the infantry fighting till 1.30 a.m. on the 18th, when the Canadians made another counter-attack with the intention of regaining their former positions between Sanctuary Wood and Hill 60. The Germans were taken by surprise, and fell back sullenly under the impetuosity of the attack. Trench after trench was retaken, three officers and 158 men being made prisoners. Sanctuary Wood and Hooze remained in the enemy's hands, but elsewhere the British line was intact, and the Germans suffered a third defeat.

The initial success achieved by the Germans on June 2nd is a further proof, if such were wanted, of the enormous power which artillery now exerts on the modern field of battle. The bombardment came as a surprise to the divisional commander, who clearly had no suspicion of its imminence. It is possible to effect an artillery concentration without discovery. The movement of men is less easy to hide from the observation of airmen than the movement of guns. The latter can be brought up at night and placed in concealed positions till the moment for action arrives. When, on the other hand, a large movement of troops takes place, they betray their presence by a corresponding movement of supply wagons and the other transport accessories of a combatant force. It thus happened that the German bombardment began on the morning of June 2nd without equality of artillery strength on the British side. The German batteries were massed in sufficient numbers to shatter the front line trenches, and at the same time isolate them by a barrage of fire interposed between the first and second line defences. The defenders could neither retire on their support nor could the supporting troops advance to their help. Even had they broken through the curtain of fire in front of them they would only have increased the size of the human target which was being assailed by the enemy's guns. For the men in the first line trenches there was nothing left to do but to hold on as best they could till the bombardment ceased to let the attacking infantry through. This the Canadians did, and when the German infantry reached their trenches they

fought as never men fought before till they were overwhelmed by superior numbers. It was a splendid story which *The Times* correspondent had to tell in his eloquent despatch of June 8th : " Long after the issues of minor engagements in this war are forgotten, and when everybody has ceased to care whether we gained or lost a hundred yards of ground or a mile of trench, the memory of how the Canadians fought against hopeless odds near Hooge will be remembered, and Canada and the Empire will be proud for generations to come of the men whose deeds I have mentioned."

Since June 18th there has been no more infantry fighting, and no further attempt from the German side to straighten out the historic salient, for the defence of which so much British blood has flowed. It is generally agreed that the retention of the salient confers no advantage on the defenders, while the line of the Yser Canal would be a more defensive position ; but sentiment counts for much in war, and the moral effect of retaining possession of a victorious battlefield cannot be exaggerated.

THE STRUGGLE ROUND VERDUN

During the period covered by this chapter the fighting round Verdun continued with the same intensity as before, the Germans renewing their attacks again and again with reckless disregard of the losses incurred in their vain attempts to win through. They won some local tactical successes and made some slight advance towards the town on both sides of the Meuse, but the price which they paid for their successes was incommensurate with their value. It has been calculated by a French authority, who obtained his information from documentary evidence and reports of prisoners, that up to May 15th the German losses before Verdun amounted to 370,000, and assuming that further casualties occurred on the same scale since that date, the total loss up to June 15th cannot have been less than 450,000. The French loss was also heavy, and particularly in prisoners, owing to the tenacity with which French troops held on to exposed positions long after the continuance of the defence was tactically hopeless ; but the roll of killed and wounded men was probably only half that of the Germans, who have been continuously attacking, while, except for infrequent counter-attacks, the French have been defending their positions.

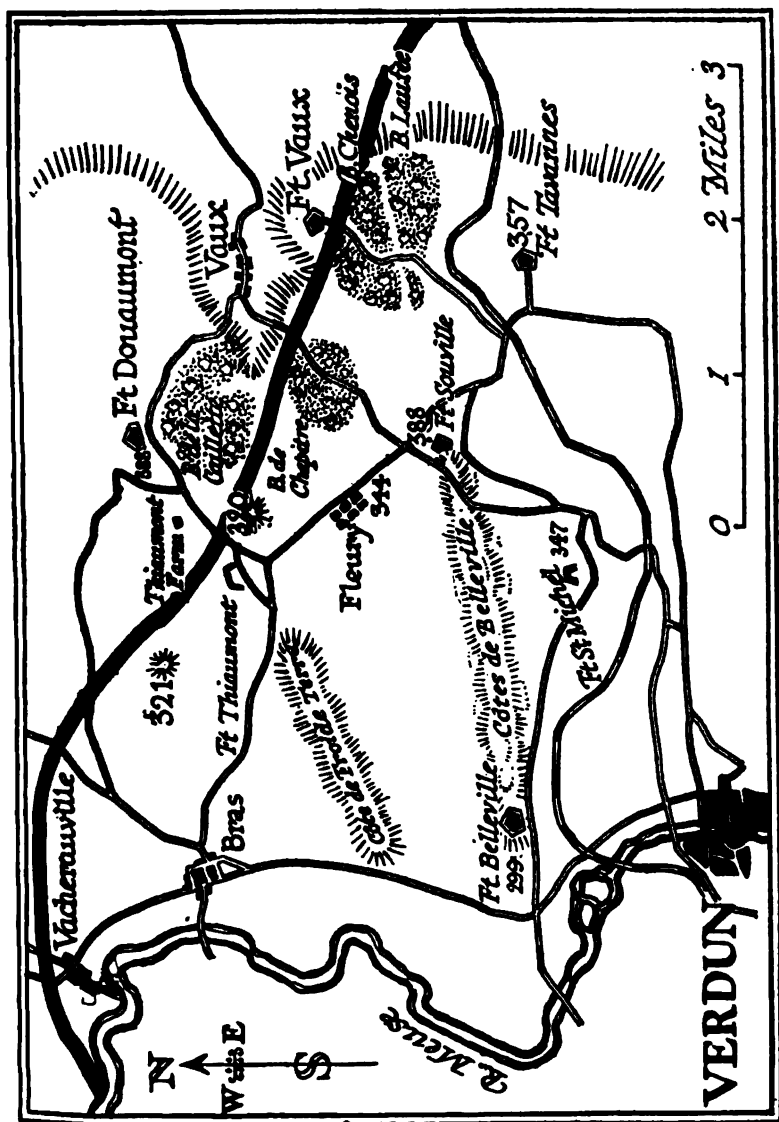
After his failure during the second and third weeks in May

to turn the French out of Avocourt Wood ¹ and assail Hill 304 from the west side, the Crown Prince, acting always under orders from the German General Staff, launched another attack against the Mort Homme position on May 20th, and succeeded in occupying some advanced French trenches on the northern and western slopes. The battle continued the following day, and on the night of the 21st a desperate attempt was made to reach the summit of the hill up the western slopes, but the French defence was too powerful, and a well-timed counter-attack enabled our Allies to recapture some of the ground lost on the previous day. On the 22nd the Germans drew off their troops, as is their wont after a reverse, and on the left bank of the river the day passed quietly without any infantry action. On this day the French took the initiative on the right bank, carried some trenches to the north of Thiaumont Farm, and forced their way into Fort Douaumont, from which, however, they were ejected on the 24th, when a furious counter-attack was delivered by two divisions of Bavarian troops. Renewing their attack against the Mort Homme position on the 28rd, the Germans penetrated into the northern part of the village of Cumières, and then brought up three fresh divisions with the object of enveloping the hill. The battle raged round the hill with varying success till May 29th, the 100th day of the German offensive movement against Verdun, when the Crown Prince determined to make a supreme effort to break through the French lines and reach the Meuse at Chattancourt. Two army corps were employed, and a general attack was launched along the whole line from Avocourt Wood to Mort Homme, the main push being made in the salient which the Germans had already driven into the French front west of the village of Cumières. The attack everywhere broke down except between Mort Homme and Cumières, when, after repeated assaults had been made on their position, the French were compelled to withdraw to the south of the Béthincourt-Cumières road, but without losing hold of the southern outskirts of the village. The battle continued throughout the 30th with great violence, and at one time it looked as though the Germans would succeed in their object. Breaking through the village of Cumières, they pushed the French out of the Bois des Caurettes and forced them to fall back towards Chattancourt, where the French organised a counter-attack, which was a brilliant success for

¹ The sketch in Chapter XXIII is sufficient to illustrate the following remarks, the positions of the opposing forces having undergone little change since it was drawn.

our Allies, who rolled the Germans back to Cumières and re-established their line in the southern extremity of the Bois des Caurettes. About this day the French evacuated the summit of Mort Homme, which, like the Côte de Talou on the right bank, had become a No Man's Land owing to its exposure to artillery fire from both sides. The Germans held the northern slopes of Mort Homme, while the French were firmly established on the southern and western slopes, this being the position on June 18th, when this chapter is closed, the French line running from Avocourt Wood over Hill 804, along the south of Mort Homme to the Bois de la Caillette, and thence to the Meuse. Hill 804 with its western spur, Hill 287, remained in French possession.

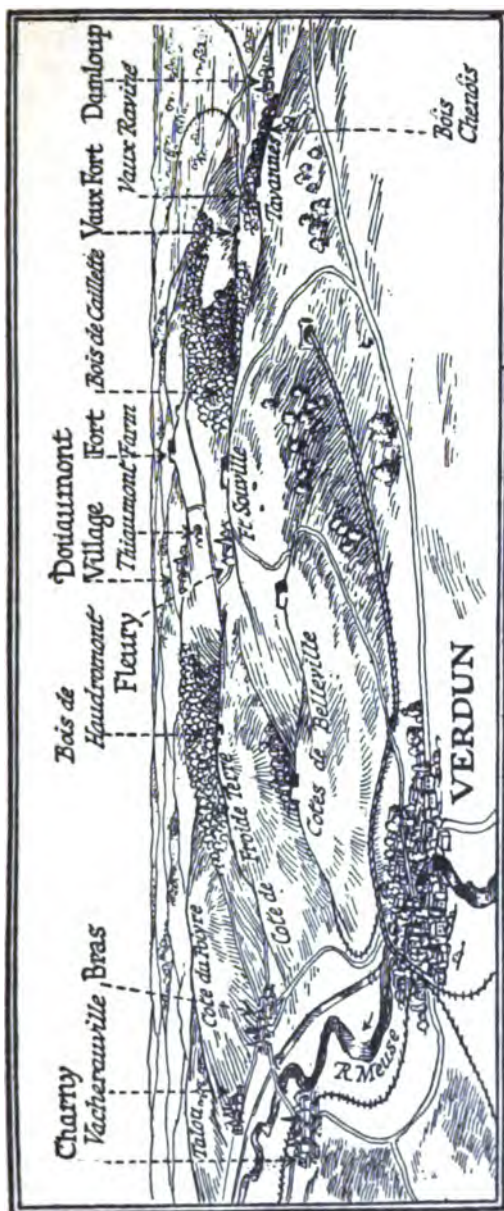
After his failure to win through on the left bank of the Meuse, the "Higher Command" instructed the Crown Prince to transfer his efforts to the right bank, and use Fort Douaumont and the works constructed round it as a starting-off point for a further advance, with the object of driving the French off the Douaumont plateau and forcing them back to the Côte de Belleville, where their last and most formidable line of defence is situated. Before this could be done it was necessary to capture Fort Vaux, which had long been a thorn in the German side. The fort is situated on the heights overlooking the deep ravine which extends from the village of Damloup in a north-westerly direction to the western spurs of the Douaumont plateau. Its guns not only dominated the ravine, but were in a position to bring an enfilade fire to bear on troops advancing from Fort Douaumont to Fleury. It was absolutely necessary to seize this important tactical point before attempting any ulterior operations, and the Germans decided to undertake the task, no matter what price they had to pay for success. On June 1st the attack began with a bombardment, which is described as one of "extreme intensity," during the course of which German infantry columns debouching from the Bois de Haudromont and Bois d'Hardaumont, west and east of Fort Douaumont, stormed the positions on the north side of the ravine, and then descended into the ravine. Fighting went on all through the night, and on the 2nd the Germans captured the village of Damloup, which is under the cliff on which Fort Vaux is situated. On the same day they got a firm footing in the northern part of the Bois de la Caillette, on the north side of the Vaux ravine, and in the afternoon the infantry swarmed up the south spurs of the cliff and attempted to rush the fort by a *coup de main*. The attempt to



effect a lodgment in the fort at first failed. Undaunted by their defeat, the Germans returned to the attack, and eventually succeeded late at night in penetrating into the ditch of the fort, which had been battered to pieces by the German guns. There they remained for four days, unable to enter the interior of the fort, which was held by Major Reynal and a battalion of French infantry. The defence was admirably organised, and reflected high credit on the intrepid commander and men of the garrison, who clung to their posts throughout the storm of shell which was rained into the fort at the rate of 8000 shells a day. To escape the shell the garrison retreated into bomb-proof refuges, and there they held out till the fort was surrounded and the water supply cut off, when further resistance was beyond the limits of human endurance. The surrender took place in the early morning of June 7th.

After the fall of Fort Vaux there was a lull in the German offensive till the night of June 12th, when a violent attack was made on the French entrenchments south of Thiaumont Farm, and extending east and west of the road from Douaumont Fort to the Côte de Froide Terre. This position turned out to be a very strong one, and the Germans at first failed to make any impression on its defences. The central *point d'appui* was the work known as the Thiaumont Fort, which is close to the junction of the Fleury-Bras and Douaumont-Fleury roads, and was flanked by the fortified Hills 821 on the west and 820 on the east. During the night of the 12th the Germans penetrated into some advanced portions of the French defences on the eastern slopes of Hill 821, but they failed to get up to the main Thiaumont work, although no fewer than twelve assaults were made in the course of ten hours. The attack was renewed on the night of the 15th, with the same result of failure, "our machine-gun and rifle fire smashing successively all the attacks, which caused heavy losses to the enemy." Further attacks on the 18th met with a similar fate.

Behind the Thiaumont position are the supporting defences on the Côte de Froide Terre, and behind these is the Belleville position, the last and strongest line of the Verdun defences, extending from Fort Belleville, close to the Meuse, to Fort Tavannes, which overlooks the Woëvre plain and commands the Metz railway. Fort de Souville rises up in the centre of this defensive system and dominates the whole countryside. During the month of June the Germans brought up heavy guns to bombard the Belleville position, but with the advent of the Anglo-French offensive in Picardy, which will be described in



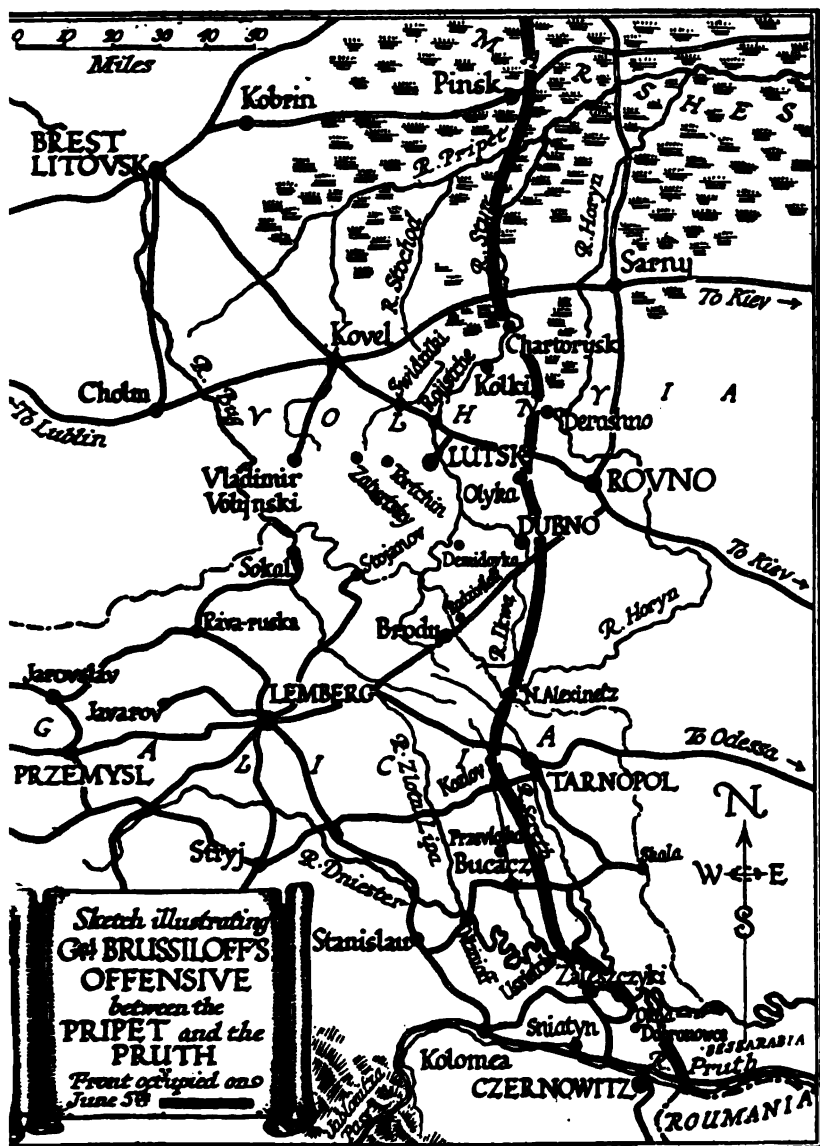
the next chapter, there was a gradual weakening in their attack till it finally collapsed, when the Germans found themselves four miles from Verdun on the right bank of the Meuse, and eight on the left bank.

Verdun was the grave of Germany's claim to military invincibility. The original conception of this attack on the fortress was a stultification of the Kaiser's decisions to incur the odium of the crime which he committed in violating Belgian neutrality. The plea of military necessity for using Belgium as a stepping-stone to Paris broke down when the Germans tried to do in 1916 what they said was impracticable in 1914, and break through the chain of fortifications on the eastern frontier of France. Of all places to select for dealing a premeditated strategic blow the Verdun salient with its strong natural defences, which had been turned to the best account by French engineers, offered the least chance of success. The execution of the attack was as faulty as its conception. A speedy victory was imperatively urgent to restore the shaken *moral* of the German people, and the process of sapping up to the French positions was too slow. There was nothing for it but the phalanx and hacking tactics. Day after day dense masses of men, driven from behind, were hurled against the French entrenchments with results which we have seen—a casualty list of half a million of German soldiers, and the French still in occupation of Verdun.

The French owe their victory to their own unaided efforts, which are above all praise. They fought during the great long-drawn-out battle as they never fought before with a courage due to a good cause, and with a confidence inspired by conscious strength. Throughout the fiery ordeal they never showed any sign either of flinching or yielding. In General Pétain they found a commander who was as skilful as he was resolute. Though he had General Joffre's permission to retire behind the Meuse he refused to make use of it. We are proud of our Allies, and the more so because the stand which they made at Verdun marked the beginning of the turn of the tide which is now flowing steadily on towards the side of the Allies.

GENERAL BRUSILOFF'S OFFENSIVE

On the night of Friday, June 2nd, in a *communiqué* issued in Vienna, the Austrian Government announced the beginning of a violent bombardment of the Austrian positions on the Bessarabian and Volhynian fronts. This was followed next



day by another *communiqué* stating that the bombardment had extended all down the front from the Pripet to the Dniester, and that "infantry attacks were imminent." The Russian Government kept silence till the evening of the 5th, when a bulletin was published at Petrograd informing the public that a battle was in progress along the whole length of the front occupied by General Brussiloff's armies, and stating that 18,000 prisoners had fallen into Russian hands. This was the beginning of a movement which led to another Austrian *débâcle* even more disastrous in its consequences than that of September 1914.

The sketch drawn for this chapter shows the approximate positions of the opposing forces between the Pripet and the Pruth on the day when General Brussiloff launched his attack. Three separate Russian armies were launched on a front of some 200 miles or more—a northern army under General Kaledine, who had charge of the operations in Volhynia; a central army under General Scherbacheff, whose objective was Lemberg; and a southern army under General Lechitsky was charged with the re-conquest of the Bukovina. These three armies all manœuvred under the supreme direction of General Brussiloff, who had relieved General Ivanoff in command of the southern group of Russian armies. What their numbers were or how they were constituted is not known, but that they were well supplied with munitions of all kinds is clear from the ease with which the Russian artillery shattered the elaborate defences which the Austrian engineers had constructed on their front.

Opposed to the Russians in this sector of the front were three groups of armies, composed partly of German but principally of Austrian troops, no definite information being forthcoming as to the enemy's strength in this locality. The northern group was under General Linsingen, whose headquarters during the spring were at Vladimir-Volynsk, under him being the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, whose army before its discomfiture was deployed north and south of the Rovno-Kovel railway between Kolki and Olyka, while next to the Archduke was General Boehm-Ermolli, who was in position on the right bank of the Ikwa between Dubno and Novo Alexinetz. North of the Archduke was Prince Leopold of Bavaria, whose headquarters were at Kobrin, and who had three German infantry and two cavalry divisions holding the line from the Oginski canal north of Pinsk down to the Kovel-Sarny railway. South of Novo Alexinetz, covering the approach to Lemberg

along the railway from Tarnopol, and watching the passages over the Strypa¹ down to its junction with the Dniester, was an Austro-German army under the command of General Bothmer; while between the Dniester and the Roumanian boundary General Pflanzer-Baltin, with a purely Austrian army, was guarding the Bukovina frontier.

The above being the position on June 4th, what happened was briefly as follows: The three Russian Armies were set in motion simultaneously; General Kaledine, who appears to have had the largest army, struck out in three directions—on his right along the railway from Rovno to Kovel, in the centre along the high road to Vladimir-Volynsk, and on his left along the Rovno-Dubno-Brody railway. The Archduke's force, concentrated chiefly round Olyka, was badly cut up and fell back in disorder behind the Styr. Kaledine's troops occupied Lutsk on June 7th, and next day forced a passage over the Styr at Rojstische. His centre then pushed on rapidly from Lutsk through Tortchin and Zaturtsky, reaching the village of Lokatchi, within twelve miles of Vladimir-Volynsk, on the 17th. Kaledine's right wing, meanwhile, fought its way to Swidniki, on the Stokhod, twenty miles from Kovel on the 16th, on which day his left wing reached Radzivloff, seven miles from Brody. Heavy fighting then went on at the apex of the salient which Kaledine had thrust into the Austro-German front towards Vladimir-Volynsk, over a distance of forty miles, as also on its two faces at Swidniki and Radzivloff. The Archduke's retreat was a complete *débâcle*. In twelve days General Kaledine reported that he had captured 70,000 prisoners, of whom 1809 were officers, with 88 guns, 28 machine-guns, and large stores of war material, such as searchlights, field kitchens, concrete girders, small-arm ammunition, and coal.

General Scherbatcheff made an equally successful start, and, after driving in Bothmer's outposts, cleared the whole country east of the Strypa from Kozlof down to the junction of the river with the Dniester. Reaching Bucacz on June 10th, he crossed the Strypa at several points, but his further progress was held up by a rally of Bothmer's troops at Przevloka, and no advance could be made in that direction or along the railway west of Tarnopol, where the enemy was strongly entrenched. In the first week of his victorious advance to the Strypa, Scherbatcheff took 17,000 prisoners, 414 being officers, with 29 guns and 84 machine-guns.

¹ The course of the Strypa is shown on the sketch, but the name of the river has been accidentally omitted by the draughtsman.

General Lechitsky struck hard and rapidly at his adversary in the Bukovina. Hoping to surround General Pflanzer-Baltin's army on the Bessarabian frontier, he seized the bridge-head at Zaleszczki on June 12th, and sent his cavalry across the Dniester to cut the Czernowitz-Kolomea railway at Sniatyn. This was successfully accomplished on the evening of the 18th by a fine piece of cavalry work. Czernowitz being then threatened from three sides, Pflanzer-Baltin ordered the town to be evacuated, strong rearguards being left behind to delay the Russian advance. The Russians captured the Czernowitz bridge-head on the 17th, and General Lechitsky entered the town on the same day. Crossing the Pruth at many points, the Russian cavalry went in pursuit of the routed Austrian army, making many captures of prisoners and guns on the way. On the night of Sunday, the 18th, Russian cavalry were reported to have reached the Sereth. Deprived of his line of retreat over the Jablonitza Pass, Pflanzer-Baltin's only way back to Hungary was by the Borgo Pass, and beyond Dorna Watra there was no railway to help him. With the Russians following close on his heels, he managed to get across the Carpathians and save the remnants of his demoralised army. In the first week of the Russian offensive he lost in prisoners alone 754 officers and 88,000 men, while 49 guns and 120 machine-guns were left in Russian hands.

General Brussiloff's strategy was the outcome of what was evidently a carefully considered plan of campaign, having for its object to seize the railway junction of Kovel, occupy Lemberg, and intercept the enemy's communications with Hungary. The plan succeeded in its initial steps beyond all expectations. The Austrian armies were broken and dispersed. After a fortnight's fighting 8000 officers and 170,000 men were prisoners in the hands of the Russians, who captured 174 guns, 484 machine-guns, and an immense quantity of war booty. Including killed and wounded, the total casualties up to June 18th were estimated to be 800,000, which was 40 per cent. of the force which the Austrians are believed to have had on the Pripet-Czernowitz front at the end of May. The further progress of the campaign will be reserved for the next chapter.

In an interview with Mr. Stanley Washburn, *Times* correspondent with the Russian armies, General Brussiloff explained the causes of his initial success. There was absolute co-ordination between all the armies, and a general attack being timed to begin at the same hour all along the 200-mile front, it was impossible for the enemy to shift troops from one quarter

to another, since the attack was equally pressed at all points. Then again the Russian artillery was used with great effect owing to the supply of ammunition being unlimited. The very strength of the Austrian defences proved to be a weakness, for the trenches were so deep, and their communications so intricate, that the Austrian troops had no time to evacuate them when their positions were threatened from the rear. Hence the large number of prisoners taken. "For the first time in the war," said General Brussiloff, "we have had sufficient ammunition to enable us to use curtain fire for preventing the enemy from retiring from his positions save through a scathing zone of shrapnel fire, which renders surrender imperative."

What General Brussiloff did in the east can also be done in the west under similar conditions as regard tactical co-operation and the supply of ammunition. Local attacks, such as those at Neuve Chapelle, Loos, and in Champagne last year, only waste strength without producing results. To be successful attacks must come as a surprise, and be made over an extended front with simultaneous effort by every unit engaged. An antecedent artillery preponderance is a further condition of success, for without it not even our own incomparable infantry can hope to win through to victory. This is the lesson of the war, and General Brussiloff has shown us how to apply it.

CHAPTER XXVI

June 18th to July 18th

1916

Close of the second year of war—Recovery of leeway—Work of the Ministry of Munitions—Anglo-French offensive on the Somme—French reach the river bank—British capture German first line positions—Battle of July 14th—British establish a footing in the German second line—Allies' air preponderance—Their artillery preponderance—Methodical progress—Good company leading—Linsingen's rally on the Stokhod—Failure of his attempt to recapture Lutsk—Bothmer clings to his positions on the lower Strypa—Complete conquest of the Bukovina—Lechitaky occupies Delatyn—His brilliant leadership—Enemy's losses—Problem of the future.

BEFORE entering on the third year of war it will be convenient to take stock of the situation as between ourselves, our Allies, and our enemies, and see what progress has been made during the past year towards the victory which will put an end to the death struggle in which we are now engaged.

In the winter of 1915, when a wave of despondency was passing over the country owing to the temporary collapse of the Russian offensive, the writer pointed out (Chapter XV) that instead of giving way to doubts we had every reason to congratulate ourselves on results. We had cleared the seas of Germany's ships, blockaded her coasts, and taken possession of all her colonies, except the one which has since passed into our hands. In Europe, Germany's offensive had been checked, both in the west and east, and the initiative had passed out of the hands of her generals into those of the Allies. From the day when the German armies ceased to attack, and began to dig themselves into defensive positions, victory, however long it might be delayed, was ultimately assured to the Allies. Invaders cannot stand indefinitely on the defence: they must either advance or retire, and the latter alternative is the one which the Germans have been striving to postpone, but which they are now being driven to face.

The events of the second year justified this forecast. Some things happened which are regrettable, except for the lessons

which they have taught; but taking the year as a whole it is correct to say that Germany's initial successes reached their high-water level at the end of 1915, and the tide then began to turn in favour of the Allies. The enemy's attempt to regain the initiative in France ended, as was seen in the last chapter, in sanguinary failure, which weakened the strength of the German armies without producing any compensating results. Defeated on the Meuse, the Germans are now defending themselves on the Somme, where the Allies are threatening to pierce their centre and seize their communications with Belgium. In Russia they are clinging to their positions with admirable tenacity, but with difficulty, which is daily increasing, owing to the resumption of offensive operations by the Russian armies. Another *débâcle* has overtaken the Austrian army, and the Dual Monarchy is tottering to its fall. In Asia the Russians are marching through Armenia, and will soon be knocking at the eastern gates of Constantinople. Taught by misfortune, we are preparing for another advance to Baghdad as soon as the cool season sets in. In every theatre of war the Allies are showing an offensive activity which has already produced some notable successes and gives promise of more to come. On the seas the Battle of Jutland has confirmed our claim to naval supremacy and removed all fears of a German invasion. The outlook is everywhere encouraging.

After two years of preparation we have settled down to the war with the grim determination to see it through to a successful end. With the exception of an insignificant minority of obscure persons, all classes of the community throughout the Empire are united in the resolve to win. Great Britain has now become a Military as well as a Naval Power. We have raised an army of five millions of men by voluntary enlistment, and have supplemented these with a reserve of men compelled by law to share the lot of their more patriotic countrymen. Whereas in 1914 we began the war with six divisions, we have now seventy divisions on the western front alone. The confusion into which the War Office was thrown when the Secretary of State for War attempted to grasp all power and responsibility in his own hands has been replaced by a decentralised organisation; which is working both smoothly and effectively. The Secretary of State has reverted to his constitutional position as Cabinet Minister responsible for policy, while the executive conduct of the war has been placed in the hands of the Chief of the General Staff. There is no longer any interference with executive commanders, who are

given their task and left to do it. The complete assent which was given at the end of last year to the principle of decentralisation is having a corresponding effect on the conduct of the war, administrative and executive officers being now able to work together in uninterrupted unison.

A great advance was made by the Allies during the second year of the war in the direction of closer co-ordination, both of policy and action. International Councils were established of Ministers responsible for policy and of Military Staffs charged with the execution of agreed plans of campaign. Instead of each of the Powers acting with separate aim and effort, all now act together with common purpose and combined direction. When General Cadorna was being hard pressed on the Trentino front, Austrian pressure was removed by General Brussiloff's offensive south of the Pripet. When Verdun was in danger of falling into German hands the Anglo-French offensive on the Somme brought relief to General Pétain on the Meuse. The inter-dependence of all theatres of war is now recognised by the Allied commanders, who take no decision of importance without previous consultation with one another. There can never be quite the same unity of command among the Allies as exists with the Central Powers, but in spite of geographical difficulties they are working on lines of mutual co-operation, which has already produced beneficial results.

The creation of the Ministry of Munitions in June of last year came in time to save the situation for our Allies and ourselves. Though Great Britain is the leading manufacturing nation in the world nothing was done during the first year of the war to make the best use of our industrial wealth for war purposes. Of workshops and workers there were enough, but they were not organised, and many skilled artisans had been allowed to volunteer for service in the field. Want of organisation was the cause of a wasteful over-lapping of time and labour; and matters were made worse by the unprofitable way in which the Naval and Military authorities competed, one service against the other, for the supply of munitions. In a few weeks Mr. Lloyd George established order out of chaos, with results which exceeded expectation. We are now supplying munitions, not only to our own armies, but to those of our Russian Allies, whose requirements are far in excess of the maximum output of the Russian factories, even with such supplementary help as can be obtained from Japan and America. During a conference of representatives of the Allied Powers in

London, on the 18th July, 1916, Mr. Lloyd George gave an interesting account of his stewardship, and threw much light on the work which the new department has accomplished during the first year of its existence.

"When we last met," he said, "the Russian armies were facing a hailstorm of iron with flesh and blood. The British troops were condemned to an enforced inactivity because our munitions were not equal to a sustained attack. Hundreds of thousands of men and women, hitherto unaccustomed to metal and chemical work, have been trained for munition making. The new factories and workshops which we have set up have not yet attained one-third of their full capacity, but their output is increasing with great rapidity. If officials, employers, and workmen keep at it with the same zeal as they have hitherto employed, our supplies will soon be overwhelming. Still, our task is but half accomplished. Every great battle furnishes additional proof that this is a war of equipment. More ammunition means more victories and fewer casualties."

Truer words were never uttered. Victory depends quite as much on the men who make the munitions as on those who use them. The factory workers know this, and are sacrificing their holidays at the call of their comrades who are fighting for them at the front.

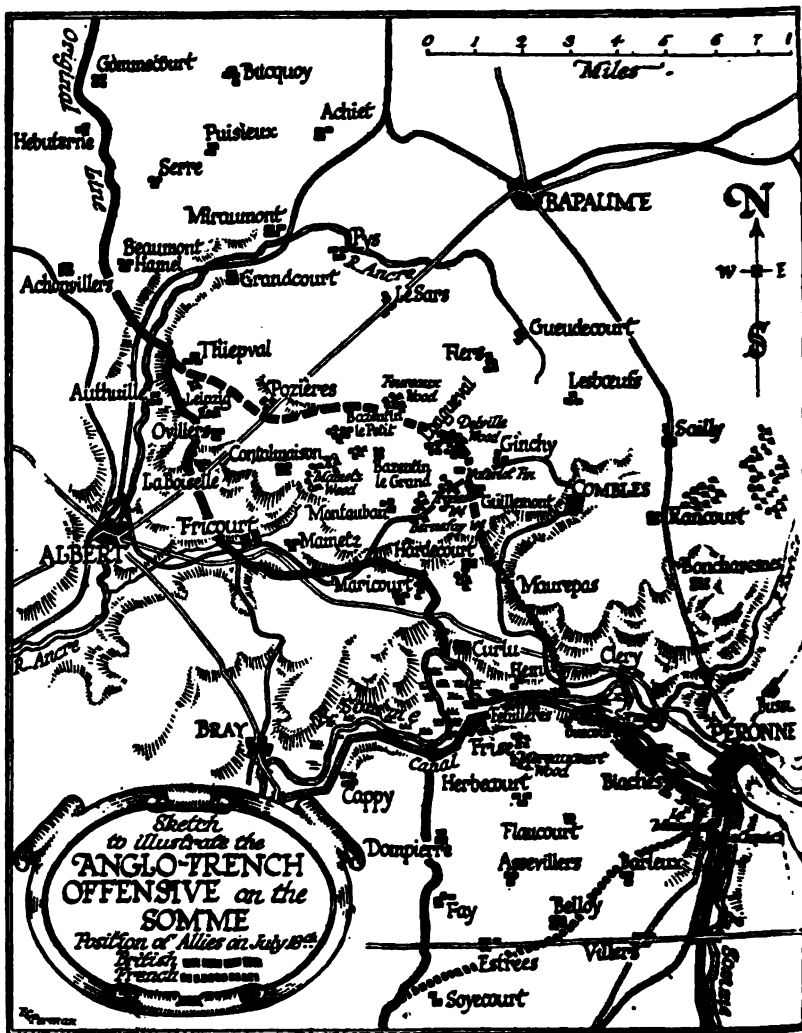
THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME

Turning now to the events of the past month, the Anglo-French offensive, which was launched on the morning of July 1st, claims first attention, for it is the only attempt at a combined offensive movement which has been made since the end of September 1915, when the joint attack of the British and French troops south of La Bassée Canal led to abortive results, for reasons which have since been made clear.

The point chosen for the new offensive is nearly midway along the northern battle-front, across which the opposing forces have been watching each other for so many dreary months. It will be remembered that during the month of March, when the German attack on Verdun was developing, General Haig undertook to relieve the French of that part of their front which extends from Arras to the Somme, the river being the dividing-point between the British and French forces.¹

¹ At one time British troops occupied the ground down to the banks of the Somme, opposite Curlu, but the French must have reoccupied Maricourt before the present offensive began, as some of General Foch's troops are now operating north of the river.

Peronne is the immediate strategical objective of the Allies, for if they can regain possession of that town, which is the



key to the Upper Somme valley, they will secure hold of a strong *point d'appui* for an offensive movement over the watershed which separates the valleys of the Somme and Oise

from those of the Scheldt and Sambre. The point was well chosen, with a correct appreciation of the strategic conditions of the campaign which is now being fought out in the north of France.

A glance at the sketch accompanying this chapter shows that the original opposing line at the point selected by the Allies for their attack made a salient in the German front in the direction of Peronne, the salient being more pronounced on the right than on the left bank of the Somme. Judging from the movements already made, and especially from the direction which General Haig's attack is taking, it seems clear that the Allied commanders intend to push this salient out towards Peronne on both banks of the river, and then attack the German positions at Bonchavesnes and Mont St. Quentin on the north side of the town. Owing to the marshy nature of the bed of the river, which is unbridged between Cléry and La Chapelette, where the railway viaduct crosses to the right bank, a frontal attack over the river from the west would be a costly operation, and the only practicable way of capturing the town is to turn the enemy's defences on the north.

Expecting for some time past that a British attack would come between Arras and the Somme, the Germans had constructed an elaborate system of first-line defences, extending from Gommecourt through Beaumont-Hamel, Thiepval, Ovillers, La Boisselle, Fricourt, and Mametz, down to the Somme, with strong fortified posts (midway between their first and second line defences) at Contalmaison and Montauban. This first line had been fortified with the scientific skill which German engineers have brought to bear on their work throughout the whole course of the campaign. The trace of the works followed the lines of Vauban's system of fortification, the villages, which were little fortresses, performing the functions of bastions, connected together by communicating curtains, each village providing flank defence for its neighbour. Round these defensive bastions were successive lines of trenches and barbed wire entanglements intersected with deep bomb-proof dug-outs cleverly designed to protect the men and machine-guns from artillery fire. It thus frequently happened that after our attacking infantry had rushed through a trench, clearing the defenders out of it, the machine-guns were brought out from the dug-outs and a reverse fire poured on the attacking troops who had passed on to the trench beyond. The German second line of entrenchments extended from Thiepval on the Ancre to Pozières, and thence through Bazentin-le-

Petit and Longueval to Guillemont, and was connected with the first-line system by longitudinal communicating trenches which followed the contours of the ground, and were broken off where natural cover rendered them unnecessary. It is understood that a third line of entrenchment has been prepared north and south of the Albert-Bapaume road between Pys and Flers. Taken as a whole, the German position between the Ancre and the Somme was one of great natural strength, which had been turned to the best tactical account by the ingenuity of the German engineers.

South of the Somme the French had a less arduous task than General Haig's troops had to undertake north of the river, for between their original line, as shown on the sketch, and the Somme valley the ground was for the most part level, with only here and there slight variations in height, and it had not been prepared for defence with the same elaborate care which the Germans devoted to the fortification of their positions facing the British front. This accounts for the small loss of the French troops during their advance in the first week in July, as compared with that of the British army, but it in no way detracts from the fine leadership of General Fayolle, who was in executive command of the attacking corps under the supreme direction of General Foch, the Army Group Commander in this sector of the front, for, as will be presently seen, the French advance was a very brilliant piece of work which reflects high credit both on the general and his troops.

No order of battle was promulgated either of British or French troops engaged, nor was there any published information to show the designation of the divisions or the names of their commanders. We knew from General Haig's reports that he was personally directing the operations on the British side, and it was believed that divisions from both the 3rd and 4th Armies, commanded respectively by Generals Allenby and Rawlinson, were fighting under his command, but in the absence of official data no attempt could be made to locate units or indicate their distribution. All that was possible was to record movements made and positions captured in the order of sequence notified in General Haig's official *communiqués*, which were published twice a day with commendable regularity since the beginning of the movement.

The approximate positions of the German troops facing the Anglo-French front on the morning of July 1st were as follows : Between Gommecourt and the Somme was the 14th German Corps, with the 52nd Independent Division prolonging the

line towards Arras. Two divisions of the Prussian Guards were in reserve at Cambrai. These were both called up to the front as soon as the British offensive was developed, as also were other troops taken where they could be best spared from other parts of the front. On July 18th, the day when this chapter was closed, it is believed that 115 battalions, as estimated by our Staff, were concentrated on the eight-mile front between Thiepval and Guillemont, but many of them were reduced to less than half their war strength during the course of the fighting. Opposite General Fayolle, distributed along the line Frise, Herbécourt, Dompierre, Fay, Estrées, was the 6th German Corps, comprising some twenty-seven battalions only, but these were speedily augmented by twelve additional battalions belonging to the 17th Corps, bringing the number up to thirty-nine. According to later unofficial reports, the number was increased to seventy-two, some having been detached from the Crown Prince's Army at Verdun. Though aware of the contemplated British offensive, the German Staff did not anticipate an attack by the French south of the Somme, believing that our Allies had their hands full at Verdun. This accounts for the comparative weakness of the German front south of the Somme and for the rapidity of the French advance.

Taking the French attack first, what took place was briefly this. On the morning of Saturday, July 1st, after a general bombardment of the German front which had extended over several days, the French infantry rushed out of their entrenchments between Maricourt and the Somme, carried the whole of the German trenches facing them, and pushed close up to Hardecourt and Curlu. A simultaneous attack south of the Somme gave them possession of the villages of Becquincourt, Dompierre, Bussus, and Fay. The suddenness of the attack took the Germans by surprise, and more than 5000 prisoners fell into the hands of the French on the first day of the battle. During the night of July 1st the French captured Curlu, and next day they took possession of Frise and the Boise de Mereaucourt. The village of Herbécourt was taken on the night of the 2nd, and the whole of the German first line of defences was then in French occupation. On the 8rd, before the Germans had time to recover from their surprise, moving out of the Bois de Mereaucourt, the French seized the village of Feuilleres, and stormed Assevillers in a brilliant assault. Later in the day they occupied Buscourt. By this time the number of prisoners had increased to 8000. On the 4th, the

villages of Estrées and Belloy-en-Santerre were both captured, and during the night the French pushed on to Sormont Farm, opposite Cléry on the right bank of the Somme. On that day also an advance was made from Curlu to Hem. By the evening of the 5th the whole of the German second line positions on a 6½-mile front south of the Somme were in French possession. On the 6th and 7th the Germans were reinforced, and delivered a series of counter-attacks which were all repulsed, while the French consolidated their new positions. On the 8th, fighting in conjunction with the British, the French captured the village of Hardecourt, north of the Somme, and next day assaulted the German position at Biaches, south of the Somme. This brought them within half a mile of Peronne. On the 11th they stormed Hill 97, and occupied the Maisonnnette farm on the summit. This brought the first phase of the French offensive to an end. The total captures amounted to 285 officers, 11,740 men, with 85 guns, 89 machine-guns, and 26 trench mortars. The French troops fought with undeniable *elan*, their further advance being checked by their arrival at the river; they had gained more ground in ten days than the Germans gained in four and a half months at Verdun.

General Haig delivered his attack along a 16-mile front extending from Gommecourt to Maricourt. On the right of the front attacked the village of Montauban was stormed early in the morning of July 1st, and the capture of this village rendered the fortified position of Mametz untenable. Two thousand prisoners were taken in and round these two villages, and the Germans were driven back to their second line positions. In the centre, south of the Ancre, heavy assaults were delivered against the villages of Thiepval, Ovillers, and La Boisselle, but our troops found themselves up against some very formidable positions, and the most they could do was to secure a firm footing in the approaches to these strong places. On the left, between Gommecourt and Beaumont Hamel, where our artillery had been less successful than south of the Ancre, no substantial gains were obtained, while the losses in one of the London Territorial Divisions and in the Ulster Division were very heavy. On Sunday, the 2nd, Fricourt was captured, and on the following day, after a fight which had lasted for sixty consecutive hours, La Boisselle fell into General Haig's hands. North of the Ancre the attack was abandoned in order to concentrate against the German front south of that river, and widen out the northern face of the Peronne salient. On Tuesday, the 4th, the battle progressed favourably, many

local points of vantage being secured, while in the evening General Haig reported that more than 5000 prisoners had been brought in since the beginning of the offensive movement. Owing to the slow progress made by our troops, in comparison with that of our Allies south of the Somme, rumour gained ground in London that the advance had been checked; but this proved to be baseless, for on July 7th our troops successfully stormed a formidable work known as the Leipzig redoubt, which was the key to the Thiepval position, while further south the village of Contalmaison was carried by storm. On the 8th an advance was made through the Bois de Bornafay to the Bois des Trônes, an important tactical point, and for the possession of which severe fighting took place during the next three days. On the 9th, 10th, and 11th, continuous progress was made in spite of the enemy's counter-attacks, and at 8.30 p.m. on the 11th General Haig was able to report the "methodical capture" of the whole of the enemy's first line positions along a front of 14,000 yards. The first phase of this tremendous battle was then brought to an end.

During the next two days our troops were occupied in consolidating their hard-won positions and in repelling a series of violent counter-attacks by the enemy, who had been reinforced on the 11th, and who, observing a slackening in the British offensive, thought to regain the lost ground. Except in the Mametz and Trônes Woods, where the Germans succeeded in regaining a footing, their counter-attacks were all repulsed, and the successes mentioned were only short-lived, as on the evening of the 12th General Haig reported both woods to be again in his complete possession. During the 13th the heavy guns were resited, and the German second line positions were then submitted to a prolonged bombardment which lasted till the morning of the 14th, when the infantry were sent forward to the attack. The battle on that and the following day resulted in a British victory, which gave our troops possession of the enemy's second line entrenchments between Bazentin-le-Petit and Longueval, while west and east of those villages respectively the men advanced close up to Pozières and Guillemont. On the 15th the Bois de Delville was occupied, and held against a powerful counter-attack, while an advanced detachment of troops pushed their way into the Bois des Fougreaux, which is in the centre of the German third line of defence. On this day a squadron of Dragoon Guards was let loose by General Haig on some Germans concealed in a cornfield, and short work was made of them.

On the 16th the detachment was withdrawn from the Bois de Fougreaux owing to its exposed position, which formed a dangerous salient in the German front. Next day the village of Ovillers, which had been the scene of ten days' desperate fighting, was finally captured, and with it the remnants of the garrison of Prussian Guards, who surrendered after having made a gallant stand. On this day also the strongly entrenched position of Waterlot Farm on the ridgeway north of Guillemont was carried, and the northern face of the Peronne salient pushed further eastwards. The further progress of the battle must be reserved for another chapter in the volume which follows this one.

When Napoleon's Marshals came to him claiming a victory the first question which the Emperor asked them was not how many men they had killed, but how many prisoners they had taken. Prisoners are the test of victory. The dead can be miscounted, but the living are there to answer for themselves. On the night of July 17th General Haig reported that his troops had captured 189 officers and 10,779 men since July 1st. With them he had also taken seventeen heavy guns and howitzers, thirty-seven field guns, thirty trench mortars, sixty-six machine-guns, and a great quantity of ammunition. These numbers were exclusive of other guns, which had not been brought in when General Haig's report was dispatched, and of those destroyed by our artillery bombardment. The list of captured men and guns testifies better than bulletins can do to the completeness of the initial British victory.

A notable feature of the battle was the preponderance which British and French airmen established over the enemy. German aeroplanes were rarely seen over the Allies' lines, while all the enemy's captive balloons, which had been used as observation posts, were destroyed during the first day of the battle. Our airmen, especially those engaged in artillery observation work, were as indefatigable as they were daring. Hardly a message arrived from General Haig without his mentioning the deeds of his airmen, who contributed so largely to the success of the troops. We and our Allies are now masters of the air.

We have at last secured that artillery preponderance for which we have been striving with all our might during the past year. Our guns both outclass and outnumber those of the Germans, and the preponderance is daily increasing. We have now made good the leeway lost in the first year of the

war owing to our want of foresight and failure to realise the deciding rôle which heavy artillery now plays on the modern field of battle. The tactical use of the heavier guns has also been improved, as shown by the promptitude with which they were resited on July 12th and 18th in order to bombard the German second-line defences before the infantry battle began on the 14th. Though a cavalry officer himself, General Haig realises to the full the value of artillery, and it is satisfactory to know that his appeal to the factory workers at home to redouble their efforts did not fall on deaf ears.

Although our progress was slow, for it could not have been otherwise under the conditions described in an earlier part of this chapter, it was continuously and methodically maintained without any serious check. The lessons of Neuve Chapelle and Loos had been taken to heart, and no more was heard of rash rushes into the enemy's lines before troops were ready to support the attack. The company leading was of the best, the officers keeping their men in hand until the artillery had done its work, and then letting them loose at the right time and place. The men fought like heroes, and at close quarters invariably showed their ascendancy over the Germans as soon as they had hunted them out of their underground lairs and forced them to stand up in the open. We hear no more, even among Germans themselves, of the invincibility of their armies.

THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE

When the last chapter was broken off General Brusiloff's offensive south of the Pripet was developing with unexpected success. On his right General Kaledine, commanding the Northern Army, had seized Lutsk, and was pushing out a salient towards Vladimir-Volynski, threatening Kovel on the right and Brody on the left. Kaledine's right wing had reached Svidniki on the Stokhod, some twenty-two miles or so from Kovel, his centre being at Locatchy and left at Radziviloff. The Central Army, under General Scherbacheff, had secured the line of the Upper Strypa, and was threatening to advance on Lemberg, while General Lechitsky, commanding the Southern Army of the Brussiloff group, had inflicted a severe defeat on the Austrians under Pflanzer-Baltin, and occupied Czernowitz.

The situation continued to develop favourably for our Allies throughout the month of July. The Austrian armies went from bad to worse, having been hit so hard that it is doubtful

if they can recover from the second *débâcle* which has overtaken them in time to prevent the Russians descending into Hungary. According to the special correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, who wrote from Hindenburg's Headquarters, and professed to have access to official information, the Russian armies operating against the Central Powers in July, 1916, numbered 187 divisions of infantry and 86 of cavalry, amounting to close on 8,000,000 men. If the Germans had 50 divisions and the Austrians 40 before General Brussiloff began his attack the first week in June, it is as many as they could have had, and half the Austrian army was destroyed during the first six weeks' fighting, while the other half was in a condition of demoralisation. The Russian reserves of men are more than sufficient, and given a continuous supply of munitions the Tzar's forces should be able to clear a good portion of Russian territory of the enemy's presence before the end of the year.

The following is a brief narrative of the salient events of the past month. As soon as the German General Staff realised the full significance of General Kaledine's threat to Kovel, reinforcements were hurried up to the line Kovel-Sokal-Lemberg, and General Linsingen was instructed to attack Kaledine's army and drive it across the Styr. Linsingen had some success at first, and the Russians fell back before his vigorous offensive, abandoning the bridge-head at Svidniki, and withdrawing from Locatchy, where the apex of the salient was too much *en l'air* for safety. During the last ten days of June fierce fighting took place between the Styr and the Stokhod, neither side being able to gain any decided advantage. Then it was that General Brussiloff brought a fresh army into the field north of the Sarny-Kovel railway with the intention of moving across the lower Stokhod and attacking Kovel from the north. This army was under the command of General Lesh, who came to the front in the Russo-Japanese war, and last year held the Cholm-Lublin line against Mackensen till his ammunition ran out. General Lesh appears to be acting under the orders of General Kaledine, who has charge of the operations against Kovel, and his troops formed the extreme right wing of the whole of the southern group of Russian armies under Brussiloff. He began to develop his attack on July 4th, and after fighting a successful battle, which gave him possession of the railway station of Manievitchi, he succeeded in carrying all the German positions covering the passages over the Stokhod, and in securing the whole length of that river on the right bank down to its junction with the

Pripet. During the course of his victorious advance he captured 12,000 prisoners and took 45 German guns with a large quantity of war material, the defeat of the Germans being so complete that their retreat was turned into a rout. Meanwhile, General Kaledine had been supporting Lesh's attack with a co-operative movement south of the railway west of Chartoriisk and Kolki. This movement was equally successful in forcing the Germans back behind the upper Stokhod, which the Russians crossed at several places after recapturing the bridge-head at Svidniki. Between them, Generals Kaledine and Lesh captured during this great drive more than 650 German officers and 22,000 men, with 50 guns and other war booty. General Linsingen rallied his beaten army on the left bank of the Stokhod, and then put up a stubborn resistance on this last line of defence east of Kovel.

The capture of Kovel would mean the immediate withdrawal of the army of Prince Leopold of Bavaria from the Pinsk salient, for that army largely depends for its supplies on the Lublin-Kovel and Lember-Kovel railways. During last winter the Germans constructed a railway extension between Kovel and Sokal, the terminus of the Lemberg line, and then carried the line from Kovel through the centre of the Pripet marshes to Pinsk, establishing by this means direct railway communication between Pinsk and Lemberg. With the Russians at Kovel the labour of the winter would be thrown away, Prince Leopold would be isolated, and there would be no alternative to retreat behind the Bug in order to open up a fresh line of communications with Hungary. Russians and Germans fully realise the stake at issue, and hence the significance of the battle now in progress for the possession of this important railway centre.

Towards the middle of July General Linsingen made a sudden effort to regain the fortified town of Lutsk and push back General Kaledine's left wing to the upper Styr. General Saharoff, who is in command of the Russian forces on the southern face of the Lutsk salient, was fortunately ready for the attack, and turning on the Austro-German army with superior numbers, not only checked the German movement eastwards, but inflicted a severe defeat on the enemy's troops east and south-east of the village of Swiniuky, capturing 13,000 prisoners and 80 guns, and driving the beaten army behind the Lipa and over the Galician frontier. General Saharoff's victory was as complete as that of General Lesh in the earlier part of the month north of the Sarny-Kovel railway. Brody

was then threatened from the north, as well as along the railway from Dubno, the Russians having occupied Radziviloff, which is only seven miles from Brody. German foresight, which has never been at fault during the war, was turned to good account when the Sokal-Kovel railway extension was constructed, for it is by this line, and by that running from Lemberg to Stojanov, that Linsingen was able to bring reinforcements to the point threatened by the Russian commander.

General Bothmer still clung to his positions on the right bank of the upper Strypa, west and south-west of Tarnopol, but his right wing was defeated on the Lower Strypa in a battle which took place on July 5th, and his position, covering the approaches to Lemberg, daily became precarious, as the two salients which General Brusiloff had driven into the enemy's front in Volhynia and Galicia respectively gradually widened and deepened under the pressure of Generals Kaledine and Lechitsky.

It now remains to follow the movements of the latter general, who lost no time in following up the occupation of Czernowitz by overrunning the whole of the Bukovina. On the night of June 18th his cavalry, following hard on the heels of Pflanzer-Baltin's rearguards, reached the Sereth, after making many captures on the way. Demoralised by defeat, and broken into detachments, the Austrian army made the best of its way towards the Carpathian Mountain passes, some few troops escaping up the Pruth in the direction of Kolomea, and others up the Sereth valley to Kutu, while the bulk of the beaten force fled south, hugging the Roumanian frontier, down which the railway ran to Kimpolung, and Dorna Watra. Some interesting details of the fighting round Czernowitz, and subsequent retreat of the Austrian army, have reached Petrograd from Russian officers who fought under Lechitsky, and whose letters have been published in the Russian newspapers. All speak of the artillery as the deciding factor, the cavalry following up the defeated Austrians, and dealing them the final blows. "The disordered retreat of the enemy," wrote one of the officers, "was an extraordinary spectacle. As far as we could see from an observing station the country was alive with infantry, artillery, and transport: horsemen in twos and threes, riderless horses rushing about wildly—a whole army in flight. Upon this mass of fugitives we let loose our cavalry. We could clearly see the panic that followed. The cavalry dashed forward and cut off the way of escape of many thousands of men and vast quantities of stores. Many entire

batteries were captured as they were being driven to the rear, in addition to large numbers of guns which could not be moved from their positions." The Russian cavalry moved rapidly. On June 21st they occupied Radautz, and on the 24th they carried the town of Kimpolung, cutting off all the Austrian fugitives who were hiding in the hills of the south-eastern corner of the Bukovina. After the occupation of Kimpolung the Russians felt their way towards the Borgo and Kirilibaba Passes, and on July 17th detachments of Lechitsky's cavalry were reported to have debouched on the road from Kirilibaba to Maramaros Sziget in Hungary, but there was no present intention of doing more than securing the Carpathian passes with a view to ulterior operations.

While Lechitsky was clearing the Bukovina of the enemy he sent the bulk of the force at his disposal up the Pruth towards Kolomea, and up the Sereth towards Kutý, his immediate objective being the railway pass of Jablonitza, which was Bothmer's main and most direct line of communication with Hungary. Kutý was captured on June 23rd, and a converging attack was then made on Kolomea by forces advancing from the east and south-east in conjunction with a cavalry division, which crossed the Dniester north-west of Horodenka, and seized the town of Obertyn on June 28th. Kolomea was occupied on June 30th, and next day an advance was ordered to Delatyn. On July 4th Russian cavalry cut the Jablonitza railway at Mikolitchine, half-way between Delatyn and Körömezö in Hungary, and on the 8th Russian troops entered Delatyn.

No praise can be too high for General Lechitsky's executive conduct of the campaign south of the Dniester, and he must have more than fulfilled the most optimistic expectations of General Brusiloff. He struck hard, rapidly, and boldly, using both his artillery and cavalry with a masterly appreciation of the power of those arms when in the hands of an enterprising commander. The pursuit of the broken Austrian army through the Bukovina was a remarkable cavalry achievement, which turned a retreat into a rout, and gave the Austrian commander no time to rally. We shall look forward to the further progress of the victorious General through Galicia, remembering always that cavalry alone cannot secure victory, and that the transport of heavy guns, such as those which shattered the defences of Czernowitz, along with their ammunition columns and reserve parks, necessary though they be, are a heavy drag on the rapid movement of an army.

The enemy's losses in prisoners alone between June 4th and July 10th were officially reported to have been 5620 officers, and 266,000 men, with 812 guns and 866 machine-guns. With the captures since reported these numbers were increased by July 18th to more than 6000 officers and 300,000 men, with nearly 400 guns and 700 machine-guns. The figures speak for themselves—and show how complete the Russian victory has been. The large majority of the prisoners were Austrians and Hungarians, but about 40,000 were believed to be Germans. What the actual numbers of killed and wounded may be is only known to the enemy, but a Russian calculation estimated the total Austro-Hungarian loss under all headings since the beginning of the Russian offensive at half a million. Speaking in the Hungarian Parliament on June 29th, Count Tisza said the Austro-Hungarian army was "wholly intact," but the figures quoted hardly seem to justify the Count's use of this optimistic adjective.

Like ourselves, the Russians have learnt by experience. The artillery bombardment during the past six weeks appears to have been undertaken without that wasteful use of ammunition which last year emptied the gun limbers and wagons just when the German offensive reached the height of its intensity. Mr. Stanley Washburn, who paid a visit to the Austrian first-line positions west of Olyka after they had been captured, reported that no attempt was made by the Russian gunners to destroy whole lines of trenches, but that corridors were cut through the lines at more or less regular intervals, and it was through these corridors that the assaulting columns rushed, while the guns kept up a vigorous shrapnel fire on the intervening trenches to prevent the defenders coming out of their shelters. Mr. Washburn testifies to the efficacy of the Russian artillery fire, which cleared the corridors of every vestige of an obstacle to the infantry advance, and at the same time enabled the gunners to continue their fire while the assault was in progress.

As we have begun so let us go on, strengthening our forces and multiplying our efforts. We have learnt much from our enemies and we may learn something from our friends. General Brussiloff is attacking on a 200-mile front, while the German front attacked by the Allies in France was only thirty miles when the offensive began, and is only twenty miles now. It may be possible to force the enemy's hands by extending the length of the front attacked, and by this means use up his forces all down the line. If new formations are required there

is no reason for limiting their number to seventy divisions now that obligatory military service has given the military authorities large reserves of waiting men. Since the victory off Jutland our sea supremacy is more firmly established than ever, and a home defence army is a white elephant, which costs a great deal without giving value in return. Abroad there are no limitations to the activities of this army. Offensive strategy in the west, moreover, need not preclude the possibility of an offensive movement from the Salonika sea-base directed against the enemy's frontier, which is more vulnerable on the south than on the west or east. Above all do we need to persevere where Fortune has temporarily deserted us. The withdrawal from the Dardanelles was an admission of defeat which would not stand repetition. The discredit attached to British arms in the east by the disaster of Kut must be wiped off the slate. The task is hard, but not beyond our powers.

" Nil sine magno
Vita labore dedit mortalibus."

END OF VOLUME I

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